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LOVE MELANCHOLY IN THE PLAYS OF JOHN FORD

by

JULIET SUTTON

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ABSTRACT

Portrayal of the various aspects of love melancholy, that body of medical doctrine and literary convention which surrounded the subject of sexual love in the Renaissance, is ubiquitous in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. But John Ford, to a greater extent than his contemporaries, made love melancholy his subject. His plays show that he was not only absorbed in the physical process of love as expounded by the medical writers, but highly sophisticated in the whole literary tradition as well. The focus of his dramatic attention is on the lover qua lover. In so far as love melancholy may be understood as frustration, it is thematically central to his plays, for frustration is at the core of his most characteristic dramatic situations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	1
I.	LOVE MELANCHOLY: GENERAL INTRODUCTION	4
	FOOTNOTES	29
II.	FORD AND BURTON	32
	FOOTNOTES	53
III.	FORD'S USE OF THE LOVE MELANCHOLY CONVENTION.	55
	FOOTNOTES	78
IV.	THE CULT OF FRUSTRATION	79
	FOOTNOTES	105
V.	STRUCTURE AND THE THEMES OF PLATONIC AND "HEROICAL" LOVE. . .	107
	FOOTNOTES	125
	CONCLUSION.	126
	FOOTNOTES	128
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.	129

ILLUSTRATION: 'Inamorato,' from the frontispiece of
 Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy.



Deep in a dump John Ford alone was got,
With folded arms and melancholy hat.

INTRODUCTION

Since the Middle Ages love has been an enormous subject, both in literature and in medical theory; and, during the Renaissance, melancholy became a term that covered just as wide an area of human behaviour. Melancholy, which was used to account for a huge variety of mentally abnormal states, from extreme depression to excessive mirth, could readily include the aberrations caused by sexual love. So Burton writes in The Anatomy of Melancholy, "Love is a species of melancholy, and a necessary part of this my Treatise, which I may not omit."

The typical figure of the pining, despairing lover comes straight from the troubadours. Arcite, in the Knight's Tale, is a pattern for the appearance and behaviour of the sufferer from "the loveris maladye Of Hereos:"

His slepe, his mete, his drynke, is hym biraft,
That lene he wex and drye as is a shaft;
His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde,
His hewe falow and pale as asshen colde,
And solitarie he was and evere allone,
And waillynge all the nyght, makynge his mone;
And if he herde song or instrument,
Thanne wolde he wepe, he myghte nat be stent.
So feble eek were his spiritz, and so lowe,
And changed so, that no man koude knowe
His speche nor his voys, though men it herde. (II. 1361 - 1371)

This figure remains the type of the melancholy lover in the Renaissance, though perhaps with the difference that, in a society where the reasons for his frustration no longer prevailed to the same extent, the Renaissance lover had more reason to hope for the ultimate cure of possession. But though this condition was the typical manifestation of love, it was

not the only one; the all-inclusive nature of the term love melancholy comprehended, for Burton and other medical writers, all the extremes of behaviour, from pining to raping, which result when "men love women with a wanton eye." Love Melancholy is an emotional and physical state, resulting from sexual love, which gives rise to many kinds of abnormal and irrational behaviour on the part of the lover. Dejection of mind and weakness of body are the typical, but not the only, manifestations of this state. Hence a discussion of the theme of love melancholy in the plays of John Ford will go beyond a discussion merely of his pining, dejected lovers.

It may be necessary here to distinguish the term love melancholy from the general term of love. Broadly speaking, the difference between them is that "love melancholy" refers to sexual love in specific relation to the Renaissance period, whereas "love" has a general application to love in all periods. Burton, when he summed up a long tradition in Part III of The Anatomy of Melancholy, thought he was speaking of sexual love for all ages. Nevertheless, we can recognize now that many of his generalizations and judgements apply to conventions and moral standards which no longer prevail. To this extent he is writing about love melancholy rather than love.

When we come to distinguish love melancholy from the love of other periods, we find that love melancholy is sexual love regarded as a pathological condition, a disease with its recognized symptoms, treatment and prognostics. All these, as I show in the first part of my thesis, become literary commonplaces: the behaviour of a lover is reduced to a pattern, just as his physiological reactions are reduced to a pattern.

But Ford goes beyond his contemporaries in his treatment of love as a disease: he obviously considers that love is a subject as competently discussed by physicians as by poets. Like Burton, he writes not only of love, but of love melancholy.

It is impossible to consider the physiological side of love melancholy without discussing the literary conventions that surrounded the subject. The Renaissance conception of love was a combination of literary tradition, medical theory and observed behaviour. These elements are, of course, inextricably mixed -- as is vividly demonstrated by The Anatomy of Melancholy itself: a medical treatise in which fact and fiction are indiscriminately used as the bases and illustrations of medical assumptions. Observed behaviour is the one element of the three which would remain constant in any conception of love: it is the particular medical theories and the literary conventions of the Renaissance (and in both of these Ford was highly sophisticated) which together make the term "love melancholy" distinct from the general term of "love." The three together comprise a conception which ranges from the purely physical to the purely conventional.

John Ford, it seems to me, demonstrates this range; and my thesis is that his thorough knowledge of contemporary medical theory and his sophisticated familiarity with the conventions of love, as well as his dramatist's interest in human motivation and behaviour, determine the conduct of his plays.

CHAPTER I

LOVE MELANCHOLY: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The subject of love melancholy can best be introduced by a survey of the medical views on the subject during the Renaissance, and an indication of their influence on contemporary literature.

A renaissance physician would not be content to dismiss love as an ultimately inexplicable phenomenon. For him every aberration of the mind has its cause in the workings of the body, and he must act equally as doctor and psychiatrist. In examining the disease of the lover, then, we find that his physiology must be discussed as well as his motivation and outward behaviour. The love malady, like any other disease, could be expected to follow a certain course: and the lover's physical predisposition to love, the outward causes of infection, his behaviour and physiological reaction when infected, and the treatments his physician would administer, were all part of common knowledge, all formed a safe and fertile subject for any literary composition.

In this chapter I intend to give a general picture of the medical and literary ideas, as well as the ethical judgement, implicit in the term love melancholy: ideas which were background knowledge for John Ford or any of his educated contemporaries; and which for Ford himself were a ruling principle in the composition of his plays.

According to Renaissance medical theory, some people are physiologically predisposed to love: these are the men and women of a sanguine complexion, since blood is the humour from which seed is refined, and an

abundance of seed provokes desire. For this reason "blood" is often synonymous with "lust" in Renaissance literature. "Thy veins are swell'd with lust," Vendice says of Lussurio^{so} in The Revenger's Tragedy,¹ and Marston's sexually insatiable countess declares,

My blood, like to a troubled ocean, . . .
Butts at the utmost shore of every limb.²

More specifically referring to the blood that is used up as seed in the act of generation, Beatrice-Joanna tells her father, "I am that of your blood was taken from you/For your better health."³

Since the sanguine humour is the most influential in promoting desire, it follows that youth, the period in a man's life of maximum sanguinity, should be likewise the period of maximum desire. The lover is typically young, and the young man is typically in love. Thomas Elyot, in The Castel of Helth, a sixteenth century equivalent to the 'home doctor' of today, could declare that sanguine men were actually "hurt by absteynynge" from venery.⁴ And Biron, in Love's Labour's Lost, has a case when he exclaims,

To fast, to study, and to see no woman;
Flat treason gainst the kingly state of youth!⁵

As a young man is partly forgivable for indulgence because his complexion gives him some excuse for his desire, an old man is correspondingly more reprehensible. The extent of the lecherous Duke's sin is the greater, in The Revenger's Tragedy, for the fact that he is old. He has no physiological excuse: sexual indulgence is actually dangerous for him since, having declined into the cold and dry complexion of age, he does not have a young man's abundance of blood to expend as seed, and can therefore be condemned as physically extravagant. Vendice speaks of

The spendthrift veins of a dry Duke,
A parch'd and juiceless luxur. (I, i.)

Heat and moisture are the qualities of a sanguine complexion, and hence of desire. A sanguine man sweats abundantly, and this connection prompts the epithet in such a phrase as "sweating Lust."⁶ There is frequent reference in literature to the moist palm of the lover: Venus, trying to seduce Adonis, describes her own in these terms:

My smooth moist hand, were it with thy hand felt,
Would in thy palm dissolve, or seem to melt.
(Venus and Adonis, l. 143).

Sir Andrew Aguecheek, mocked by Maria for his dry palm, misses the dig, and replies that he is "not such a fool but I can keep my hand dry."⁷

A similar, if grimmer, kind of irony appears when Othello comments on Desdemona's moist palm, and she, forgetting the sexual connotations of sanguinity and remembering only its connections with youth and happiness, replies confidently, "It yet hath felt no age nor known no sorrow."
(III, iv, 37).

Heat is even more the property of desire. We must suppose that the natural heat of sanguinity is greatly augmented by desire, judging by the number of references to fire and burning we find in connection with love: Venus declares that "Love is a spirit all compact with fire."⁸ This heat is the greatest of the variety of torments a lover must suffer. "As Aetna rageth, so doth Love, and more than Aetna, or any material fire. Vulcan's flames are but smoke to this."⁹ As Burton relates, a lover can actually suffer internal combustion from his own ardour:

Empedocles the Philosopher was present at the cutting up of one that died for love, his heart was combust, his liver smoky, his lungs dried up, insomuch that he verily believed his soul was either sod or roasted, through the vehemency of Love's fire. (III, 173).

This is the process that Volpone describes in himself when he is smitten by the charms of Celia:

Angry Cupid, bolting from her eyes,
Hath shot himself into me like a flame;
Where, now, he flings about his burning heat,
As in a furnace an ambitious fire,
Whose vent is stopt. The light is all within me. . . .
My liver melts, and I, without the hope
Of some soft air, from her refreshing breath,
Am but a heap of cinders.¹⁰

Diet, since food is the substance from which blood is concocted, and by which the body's complexion is partly determined, can be highly influential in promoting desire. Both quantity and quality promote the manufacture of good blood and thus the well-fed rich have a kind of prerogative to be more in love than the hungry poor. The richest foods and wines make for the maximum of heat and moisture: the more exclusive foods, such as oysters, lobster, crab and artichokes, are often mentioned as builders of blood along with the less appetising aphrodisiacs, eringoes, rhinoceros or he-monkey's marrow. Marston, in The Scourge of Villainy, inveighs against the inflammatory eating habits of the times:

Camphire and lettuce chaste
Are clean cashier'd; now Sophi ringoes eat,
Candied potatoes are Athenians' meat.
Hence, holy thistle, come, sweet marrow pie,
Inflame our backs to itching lechery!
A crab's baked guts and lobster's butter'd thigh
I hear them swear is blood for venery.

"Good drink makes good blood"¹¹ is a maxim that is confirmed by medical belief and observed behaviour. The thickest and sweetest wines, again, were considered the most heating. "Thou lack'st a cup of canary," Toby tells Aguecheek after the joke about his dry hand.¹² To such a toper as Falstaff, any but thick wine is positively enfeebling to desire:

"Thin drink doth. . .over-cool their blood."¹³ Marston's insatiable countess calls the god of wine "co-supreme with mightly Love" in inflaming the sexual appetite. (I, iii, 85).

A further cause of an easily aroused desire is idleness. Of course an idle person has greater opportunity to be in love than a busy one, since he has less to distract him. But there are physiological reasons as well. Blood is used up in both mental and physical activity, and so with lack of such activity is super-abundant, making the seed correspondingly so. This cause, uniting with the plenitude of rich food and wines that are obtainable at court among the rich, increases the social distinction implicit in the love convention. The court was necessarily, then, considered a centre of concentrated erotic activity. Burton, in explaining the term "Heroical Love", which should connect love with Eros rather than with Heroes, perpetuates the false etymology that derived the epithet from the Greek *ἥρωις*, rather than *ἔρος*, thus increasing the class distinctions that love had acquired.¹⁴

[Love] rageth with all sorts and conditions of men, yet it is most evident among such as are young and lusty, in the flower of their years, nobly descended, high fed, such as live idly, and at ease; and for that cause. . .this mad and beastly passion, as I have said, is named by our Physicians Heroical Love, and a more honourable title put upon it, Noble Love, as Savonarola styles it, because Noble men and women make a common practice of it. (III, 62).

The court therefore gained itself both a good and a bad reputation, so far as affairs of love were concerned. In some literature, including Ford's plays, there is the definite suggestion that a nobleman's love is purer, chaster and deeper than anyone else's. At the same time the court becomes the object of considerable censure for lasciviousness and

unbridled desires. Malvole, in The Malcontent, declares, "I would sooner leave my lady singled in a bordello than in the Genoa palace," and goes on to give his reasons:

When in an Italian lascivious palace,
A lady guardianless,
Left to the push of all allurement,
The strongest incitements to immodesty,
To have her bound, incens'd with wanton sweets,
Her veins fill'd high with heating delicates,
Soft rest, sweet music, amorous masquerers,
Lascivious banquets, sin itself gilt o'er. . .
Entic'd by that great bawd, Opportunity. (III, i, 183).

In so far as love is caused by youth, sanguinity, rich diet and idleness, it has its corresponding cures. Abundant activity not only reduces the opportunity of seeing the object of love, which is always detrimental to the lover's malady, but also, particularly in the case of exercise violent enough to cause abundant sweating, purges the moist quality of the sanguine humour.

Another obvious cure would be blood-letting. This "chirurgical remedy" is one which the French physician, Jaques Ferrand, deals with in considerable detail in his Erotomania.¹⁵

For as much as the seed is the joynt, Immediate cause of this Disease, as Galen proves at large. . ., and seeing that the seed is nothing else but Blood, made White by the Naturall Heat, and Excrement of the third Digestion, which provokes Nature either by its quantity or quality to evacuate it; which otherwise would corrupt within the body, and so by sending up divers noysome vapours to the Brain. . .would disturbe and hinder the operation of its chiefeſt Faculties: It seemes to be very necessary in the first place to take away the superfluity of Blood, by opening the Liver Vein in the right arme. . .

And he goes on to suggest other veins and greater frequency of treatment if the first occasion proves ineffective. There is frequent reference to this cure, both jocular and gruesome, in the drama. When Dumaine complains that his beloved reigns in his blood like a fever, Biron

suggests that "Incision/Would let her out in saucers."¹⁶ The connection between lust and blood is exploited in revenge tragedy with considerable effect. Vittoria Corombona, seeing the blood gushing from her death wound,¹⁷ acknowledges,

My greatest sin lay in my blood!
Now my blood pays for't.

And Vendice sees a similar justice as he contemplates his revenge on the lecherous Duke: "After your lust, oh, 'twill be fine to bleed!" (Revenger's Tragedy, II, ii).

To purge the superabundance of seed, "frequent use of Venus" is of course efficacious.¹⁸ Burton has a story of a woman suffering from this malady who was cured when she inadvertently found herself in a brothel and "lay with fifteen men in the course of a single night". (II, 38). This remedy, however, is an extreme one, and not usually either possible or morally defensible. "This is mad Physick, if it be at all to be permitted."

Obviously, to offset the effects of the luxury of the court, strict dieting is advised for the over-amorous man. Food should be taken in small quantity, and of quality opposite to the rich aphrodisiac foods: Burton mentions melons, cucumbers, and lettuce as suitable foods, and has various recipes of herbs and chemicals that will allay lust as the aphrodisiacs provoke it. Laurentius,¹⁹ talking of cures for the lover, considers dieting highly effective:

You must not feed him too full or daintily, lest the blood beginning wax hot, should rouse up the flesh and thereby renew the olde fire. Take away idleness, take away belly cheere, and quaffing of strong drinckes, and without doubt lechery will fall stark lame.

The physiological causes and effects of love that I have described

up to now apply to a sanguine passion. On the face of it, it would seem inaccurate to associate this kind of love with melancholy, the cold and dry humour that goes with age. And yet Burton throws all together under the heading of "Love Melancholy." A distinction, logically necessary though not always made by the medical writers, should be made between the earlier, sanguine stage of love and the later, melancholic one.²⁰ The sanguine lover is hopeful, full of ardour and energy, and, if he were to maintain his condition, would eat heartily. The melancholy lover, on the other hand, is pale, weak, and sorrowful, and tends to aggravate this condition by fasting.

The main reason for this change is the denial of his love. The superabundant seed in the sanguine lover, if not ejected, turns to melancholy; and, since a considerable amount of blood goes into the concoction of a small amount of seed, this represents a decisive loss in sanguinity. The denial causes sorrow and fear, the typical passions of the melancholic man, and their action is cooling; while the heat of the lover's desire may render his blood "adust, earthy and melancholy." His excessive mental activity, and sleeplessness caused by his total absorption in his love, also have a cooling and drying effect.²¹ The heat and moisture of sanguinity become the dryness and cold of melancholy. Moreover, since in this state of love the lover tends to fast, his blood is being used faster than it is being replaced, so that the disease is, as it were, self-perpetuating in a vicious circle, and in this way it can lead to death.

The distinction between the sanguine and melancholy stages of the disease is not always made in contemporary literature, where symptoms are

often confused; for instance, a lover may well show signs of being melancholy before he has had much chance to ascertain the feelings of his beloved. We may suppose that there was a period of overlap between the sanguine and the melancholy stages; or, in order to avoid imposing a system more rigorous than the writers' own, we may conclude with Burton that "there is no end of Love's Symptoms, 'tis a bottomless pit. Love is subject to no dimensions." (III, 212).

Though Burton treats both extremes under the heading of Love Melancholy, he makes a distinction between the treatments of the two kinds. Where for the sanguine, the more definitely lusty stage, fasting, blood-letting, and violent exercise are recommended, Burton suggests for other cases,

if they be much dejected and brought low in body, and now ready to despair through anguish, grief, and too sensible a feeling of their misery, a cup of wine is not amiss. . . (III, 222).

and goes on to say that though music, merriment, singing and dancing augment the passion of other lovers, it can be efficacious in restoring the spirits of these ones.

A further qualification should be made in the consideration of the physiological aspects of love, a qualification which the medical writers were careful to stress. Though a man's complexion, if it is sanguine, may predispose him to fall victim to love, it does not, strictly, cause the fall. The humours cannot be made to bear all the blame for a man's actions, though they may be taken into account as extenuating circumstances. Bright declares that the blending of humours in a man's body may afford occasion for perturbations of the mind, but not cause.²²

Thus love remains, on the whole, an unpredictable passion, which

may affect anyone. One reason for the representations of Cupid as blind is that he shoots his arrows indiscriminately: and though the young and sanguine and rich are the most likely to take the infection, the old and cold-blooded are not invulnerable.

Among the external causes of love, the greatest is the beauty of the beloved. Love was still generally defined in the Platonic terms as being the desire for beauty;-(though the beauty of the beloved might be only in the eye of the beholder).

Since beauty is the main incitement to desire, the senses must come into action for the perception of this beauty. And among the senses the eye holds unchallenged supremacy. It is the sight of the beloved, above all, which sets the whole process in motion. In the time it takes to exchange a glance, a person may be smitten by the thunderbolt of love. This is, literally, a coup d'oeil. "Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?"²³ cries Shakespeare's lovesick shepherdess, quoting Marlowe's precept for lovers. It is not surprising, since so much had to happen in the course of one glance, that the eye should be endowed with extraordinary power. From the eye of the beloved issues something that has almost a physical force, like a beam, a ray, or a flame. This, entering at the eye of the lover, dazzles, or blinds, or inflames him. The beams of the sun are a common analogy, as in the ridiculed address to the ladies in Love's Labour's Lost, where Moth speaks conventionally of "sun-beamed eyes." In fact throughout this play, taking, as it does, the love convention as its theme, there is constant reference to eyes and their power. In one formalized passage Boyet describes how the other senses are subordinated to the sight as a lover is exposed to the fatal beam:

Why, all his behaviours did make their retire
 To the court of his eyes, peeping thorough desire;. . .
 His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see
 Did stumble in haste in his eyesight to be;
 All senses to that sense did make their repair,
 To feel only looking on fairest of fair;
 Methought all his senses were lock'd in his eye. (II, i, 232).

The other most commonplace analogy is that which connects the beam of the eye with Cupid's arrow, again, a comparison to emphasize the physical force of the exchange of glances. In the "Hymn of Love," Spenser explains how Cupid tips his arrows with beauty with which to pierce at the eye of the beloved and thence inflame his heart.

Hearing comes as a poor second to sight among the senses, though it is recognized that men may fall in love from hearing the praises of the beloved. This has some use as a dramatic device, where the audience may hear as well as see what is going on, and may anticipate the reactions to the described beauty when she arrives. Volpone, though his love becomes violent only when he has seen Celia, is first incited to desire by Mosca's description; Proteus, in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, begins to shift his affections from Julia when he hears Valentine's praise of Silvia; and Arbaces, in A King and No King, is predisposed in the same way to love Panthea, even though he thinks she is his sister.

There is a passage in Venus and Adonis which gives the order of the senses according to their powers of erotic provocation. Venus tells Adonis that if she could neither see nor hear, she would still love by touching him. Without this, the scent of his breath would incite "love by smelling;" and finally, without the other four senses, the imagined taste of him could still support her love. (II. 433 - 450). This is perception refined to the uttermost!

The infection which enters, typically, through the eye, then travels in the veins and gradually spreads through the whole body. Laurentius gives one account of the process which, if it is not entirely in accord with others, is at least fairly representative, and certainly clear and concise:

Love therefore having abused the eyes, as the proper spies and porters of the mind, maketh way for itselſe smoothly to glaunce along through the conducting guides, and passing without any perseverance in this sort through the veins unto the liver, doth suddenly imprint a burning desire to obtaine the thing, which is or seemeth worthie to be beloved, setteth concupiscence on fire, and beginneth by this desire all the strife and contention: but fearing herselfe too weake to encounter with reason, the principal part of the minde, she posteth in haste to the heart, to surprise and winne the same: whereof when she is once sure, as of the strongest holde, she afterwarde assaileth and setteth upon reason, and all the other principall powers of the minde so fiercely, as that she subdueth them, and maketh them her vassals and slaves.

(Discourse, p. 118)

Thus love progressively subdues the three main centres of the body: the liver, seat of the appetites; the heart, seat of the affections; and the brain, the seat of reason.

There is some controversy as to the seat of love itself. True love may be located in the heart, while lust, as a mere appetite, may be relegated to the liver.²⁴ Phineas Fletcher agrees with this location of the true love in the liver, but for him true love is only Platonic:

Within, some say, Love hath his habitation;
Not Cupid's self, but Cupid's better brother:
For Cupid's self dwells with a lower nation,
But this more sure, much chaster than the other;
By whose command we either love our kind,
Or with most perfect love affect the mind. (Purple Island. III, 10)

And he places sexual love in the genitals. In any case, the liver, as well as the heart, is almost universally associated with love in one way or another; for both organs are vitally connected with the manufacture and

circulation of the blood. Hence Rosalind's guarantee when she undertakes to cure Orlando of love: "In this way will I take upon me to wash your liver as clean and sound as a sheep's heart, that there shall not be one spot of love in it." (AYL, III, ii, 400).

Resulting from this total subjection of the body to the malady are many of the conventional reactions of the lover. The effect of the infection of the heart is perceptible chiefly in the pulse, which becomes erratic. "Alas, my lord, your pulse keeps madman's time," Bellario tells Philaster.²⁵ Laurentius describes this state in the lover:

His pulse keepeth no true course, it is little, unequal, and beating thick, changing itself upon the sudden. (Discourse, p. 118).

This makes for the constant blushing and paling of the lover, the alternating sensations of heat and cold which are part of his painful existence, and which are one symptom that betrays his infection.

[Lovers] burn and freeze, (for love is fire, ice, hot, cold, itch, fever, phrensy, pleurisy, what not?) they look pale, and commonly blush at their first congress. (Anatomy, III, 157).

The lover's breathing is naturally affected too; instead of respirating normally, he heaves great sighs, or even "treble fold sighs". This may be caused by the need to cool the combustion in the heart.²⁶ Alternatively it may be that the lover is so totally absorbed in his mistress that he neglects the usual respiratory process, and so finds it necessary to take in deep breaths at irregular intervals.²⁷

The result of the distemperature of the liver is that the complexion changes colour. Paleness is the "proper colour and badge of love;" but this is a special kind of pallor; Ferrand explains:

We must not understand by this word pale a simple decoloration or whiteness of the skin. . .: but rather a mixed colour of white and yellow; or of white, yellow and green. (Erotomania, p. 121).

Don Armado, when told Delilah was of the sea-water green complexion, conceals his astonishment in the reflection that "green is indeed the colour of lovers."²⁸ In general, green is the colour of youthful frustration, and yellow of jealousy. It is reasonable enough that the two together should mark the sufferer from love melancholy. So Viola describes her lovelorn 'sister' as smiling at grief "with a green and yellow melancholy."²⁹ There is of course, a connection with the green sickness which girls sometimes contracted after puberty and before marriage.³⁰

The lover's body, then, suffers considerably in his malady. His mind, too, is totally absorbed in his beloved: "his life, his soul, dreaming, waking, she is always in his mouth: his heart, eyes, ears and all his thoughts are full of her." (Anatomy, III, 168). This leaves little time for sleeping, eating, or recreation, and by this time the delusions and sleeplessness of melancholy will have set in; and though the lover may claim "Now I can break my fast, dine, sup and sleep/Upon the very naked name of love,"³¹ the signs of his rigorous living are soon apparent in the hollow eyes, leanness and pallor that develop. Burton appropriately compares pining lovers with wilting vegetation.

The Liver doth not perform his part, nor turns the aliment into blood as it ought; and for that cause the members are often weak for want of sustenance, they are lean and pine, as the herbs of my garden do this month of May. (III, 153).

The lover reacts as violently to love in his outward behaviour. When he is stricken by the thunderbolt from the eyes of his beloved, he falls into something like a trance, in which he is unable to conduct himself normally. He stands gazing, and finds it impossible to take his eyes

off her. Philaster, though ready to perform any service for Arethusa, can only reply to her request that he should look away, "I cannot endure it." (I,i).

His speech, too, is affected, and may often be a sign to give him away. Because his breathing is impaired and his reason subjected, he cannot speak with his normal coherence. Viola, realizing that Olivia must have fallen in love with her borrowed identity, remembers that "she did speak in starts distractedly." (12N, II, ii, 22).

These signs, along with the sighing and the uneven pulse, are perceptible not only when the lover first sees his beloved, but probably whenever he sees her, or even when he looks on her picture or hears her named. All the recognized marks of the lover's falling in love become on occasions so formalized that Marston could use a stage direction, Isabella falls in love, and expect his actor, without further elucidation, to be able to portray this to the audience's satisfaction.³²

The lover is recognizable not only by his leanness and the hollow-eyed pallor which are the results of his physical condition, but by his dress and pose as well. He affects a large hat with a drooping brim in order to indulge his desire for solitude, and he folds his arms -- perhaps to "keep down his heart," as the king suggests in Love's Labour's Lost. (IV, iii, 130). The sufferer from love melancholy is thus depicted 'with folded arms and melancholy hat' in the frontispiece of the Anatomy of Melancholy, which is the illustration at the beginning of this thesis. Moth, telling Armado how he should deport himself as a lover, says he should appear

with your hat penthouse-like over the shop of your eyes; with your arms cross'd on your thin-belly doublet like a rabbit on a spit. (III,i,17).

As for the rest of his clothes, the lover would be obvious for his neglected array. "Going ungartered" was a phrase that could be used as synonymous with "being in love;"³³ and Rosalind gives a full description of the genuine lover, concluding that Orlando cannot be one:

A lean cheek, which you have not; and blue eye and a sunken,
which you have not; an unquestionable spirit, which you have not;
a beard neglected, which you have not; but I pardon you for that.
. . .Then your hose should be ungarter'd, your bonnet unbanded,
your sleeve unbutton'd, your shoe unti'd, and everything about
you demonstrating a careless desolation. But you are no such man;
you are rather point-device in your accoutrements. (AYL, III, ii, 392)

Had Rosalind had an Anatomy of Melancholy by her, however, she might have consoled herself for Orlando's apparent indifference by finding that love will often induce the opposite extreme in clothing, as it did in Claudio in Much Ado About Nothing, who would "lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet." (II, iii, 17).

Let them be never so clownish, rude and horrid, Grobians and sluts, if once they be in love, they will be most neat and spruce. (III, 201).

Logically, perhaps, these two extremes in the lover's sartorial habits may belong to the two stages in his disease: while he is still sanguine and hopeful and full of vigour, he appears point-device; and the careless desolation would belong to the weak and woebegone stage where the lover has little energy and is close to despair.

The lover was likely to take to music, like Orsino, as "food of love," and perhaps to dancing too. Marston's Isabella invokes music "to stir up appetite to Venus' banquet."³⁴ One apparently useless activity from which he could not refrain was the frequent naming of the beloved. In defect of her person, he dallies with her name. Viola says that were she in love with Olivia, she would

Halloo your name to the reverberate hills,
 And make the babbling gossip of the air
 Cry out "Olivia!" (12N, I, v, 291).

Orlando, to Jaques' disgust, carves "Rosalind" on the bark of the forest trees. And in the Two Gentlemen of Verona Speed perversely misunderstands Valentine's compulsive naming of his beloved:

Val. . . . Ah, Silvia, Silvia!
Speed. [shouting in different directions] Madam Silvia!
 Madam Silvia!
Val. How now, sirrah?
Speed. She's not within hearing, sir.³⁵

In the same way, a lover has a compulsive urge to versify and write sonnets in praise of his mistress. The lover's woeful ballad made to his mistress' eyebrow is a stock joke. Even Biron, who claims to have been love's whip, and who shows himself fully aware of Rosaline's lack of beauty, cannot resist the impulse once he has fallen: "I do love, and it hath taught me to rhyme." (LLL, IV, iii, 10). He acts as Burton might have predicted, "thereupon instantly he makes an epigram, or a sonnet to five or seven tunes."

Another product of this irrational passion is that the lover, if he cannot be in the company of his mistress, tends to eschew all other company, and to cease to care about his friends or the world in general. Silvius, the love-sick shepherd who has been talking of his own malady, makes his exit on these lines:

If thou hast not broke from company,
 Abruptly as my passion now makes me,
 Thou hast not lov'd.
 O Phebe, Phebe, Phebe! (AYL, II, iv, 40).

Above all, the lover must be completely subjected to the will of his beloved, he must be willing to perform the greatest and the meanest

feats at her bidding, from eating a crocodile to suffering humiliation. "Servant" is the common appellation for an accepted suitor; but his service may be more like slavery. This is not out of the expected order of things, for love becomes the religion of the lover. Since the courtly lover invested his mistress with the sanctity of the Virgin, the language and emotions of love and religion had become intimately mingled. "Worship" and "adoration" were paid to the beloved as to the altar, and a "heaven" could be the reward for passion as for piety. The influence could even be exerted in reverse: Donne wrote his devotional poetry in the form of a sonnet sequence; and Sir Thomas More, in The Twelve Properties of a Lover actually exhorted the religious man to take example from the lover:

The lover is of colour deed and pale:
 There wyll no slepe in to his eyen stalk:
 He favoereth neyther mete, wyne, nor ale:
 He myndeth not what men about hym talke:
 But ete he, drynke he, syt, lye downe or walke,
 He burneth ever as it were with fyre
 In the fervent hete of his desyre.

Here shoulde the lover of God ensample take
 To have hym contynually in remembraunce,
 With hym in prayer and meditacyon wake,
 Whyle others play, revell, synge, and daunce:
 None erthly joy, disport or vayne plesaunce
 Sholde hym delyte, or any thyng remove
 His ardent mynde from God his hevenly love.³⁶

Considering the violence of the lover's malady, it is hardly surprising that it should frequently end in madness -- "go to Bedlam for examples", says Burton, succinctly -- or even death. Thus this is not a disease that can be safely left to run its course. Though it is common enough, its symptoms are so varied that every case is a potential challenge to the physician. This emotion is not merely a 'phase' to be

passed through with as little damage as possible, but a pathological condition which, taken seriously, requires skilful therapy; for "they that are in love are likewise sick," Burton concludes. (III. 63).

If the lover, being entirely subject to his passion in mind and body, does not respond to any of the physical treatments of diet and blood-letting and so on, an attempt should be made to divert the patient's mind. He should be kept from the object of his affections, or encouraged to study, to seek a change of air, to travel. One efficacious diversion is the substitution of another love for the first: Romeo's love for Rosaline is effectually cured by his falling in love with Juliet. But this kind of cure is not always either possible or desirable.

Laurentius gives two cures; and Burton concentrates on the same two. These are, good counsel, and, if all else fails, possession of the beloved, -- that is, removal of the cause of the disease. This last resort, though it seems obvious to us, was still often considered, in an age where marriage was predominated by financial motives, as being in the nature of a medical treatment. Nor was this 'treatment' considered as merely a total surrender to the disease. The passionate, pining lover was in a pathological condition, his reason in abeyance to a 'perturbation of the mind.' But marriage was considered to make 'amantes no more amantes;' conjugal affection is perfectly reasonable and praiseworthy. This is why a man like Bacon can recommend Marriage whereas he is bitter against Love.³⁷

The cure by good counsel had many supporters, judging by the elaborate arguments which Burton and his predecessors put forward. These consist of a detailed enumeration and description of all the

faults, physical and mental, of the opposite sex, and a long discussion of the woes of marriage. Ingenious tricks can be used in order to wake the lover from his delusion and, by making him realize how irrational and ill-founded is his passion, to restore him to his wits. Such a trick is that Rosalind suggests for the cure, by counsel, of Orlando:

He was to imagine me his love, his mistress, and I would set him every day to woo me; at which time would I, being but a moonish youth, grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles; . . . would now like him, now loathe him; then entertain him, then forswear him; now weep for him, then spit at him. . . . And thus I cur'd him. (AYL, III, ii 427).

As for the cure by possession, it is, of course, illustrated in almost every comedy about love that ends with marriage. And though the lover may have been quite unco-operative about all the rest of the treatment (for he perversely does not want to be freed from his "cage of rushes") of course to this cure he responds most enthusiastically. If the mistress is not of the flint-hearted kind, and the lover a particularly bold and sanguine one, he may effectively plead his own case with a threat that she may be responsible for his death if she withholds the cure. This is the argument that Bertram uses on his own behalf in All's Well That Ends Well when he is wooing Diana:

Stand no more off,
But give thyself unto my sick desires,
Who then recovers. (IV, ii, 34).

Although the lover is usually presented in literature as a sympathetic, if often ridiculous, figure, in philosophy he is generally a shameful one. As a man whose reason is in abeyance to his passion, he is comparable with the beasts. Burton has plenty to say on this aspect, as on most others:

The major part of Lovers are carried headlong like so many brute beasts, reason counsels one way, thy friends, fortunes, shame, disgrace, danger and an ocean of cares that will certainly follow; yet this furious lust precipitates, counterpoiseth, weighs down on the other; though it be their utter undoing, perpetual infamy, loss, yet they will do it, and become at last void of sense; degenerate into dogs, hogs, asses, brutes. (III, p. 177).

A man who is in love is betraying that part of divinity that is within him. The subjection of his reason is apparent in many ways, one of the most obvious of which is his adoration of a fallible creature. Biron calls love

the liver-vein, which makes flesh a deity,
A green goose a goddess -- pure, pure idolatry. (LLL, IV, iii, 73)

And another satirist mocks, "She cannot spit/But the officious Sir will gather it."³⁸ A lover ceases to be able to distinguish between beauty and ugliness or virtue and vice, and attributes perfection to his mistress -- who in reality may be both hideous and wicked:

As if man, made for the contemplation of heaven and all noble
objects, should do nothing but kneel before a little idol,

writes Bacon indignantly. Moreover, the lover, in his laudations of his mistress, indulges in a "perpetual hyperbole."

All the gracious Eulogies, Metaphors, Hyperbolical comparisons of the best things in the world, the most glorious names; whatsoever, I say, is pleasant, amiable, sweet, grateful, and delicious are too little for her. . . . Stars, Suns, Moons, Metals, sweet-smelling Flowers, Odours, Perfumes, Colours, Gold, Silver, Ivory, Pearls, Precious Stones, Snow, painted Birds, Doves, Honey, Sugar, Spice, cannot express her, so soft, so tender, so radiant, so sweet, so fair is she. (Anatomy, III, 180).

But on the other hand, there are those who defend love too; and Burton can argue on both sides. Love can also make wise men out of fools, spruce men out of sluggards, brave men out of cowards, courtiers out of clowns. Dryden's story from Boccaccio of Cymon and Iphigenia celebrates just this power of love. Moreover, if one view considers the

verse written by lovers as mere hyperbole, better left uninspired, others defend it as the purest kind of poetry, and see love as a great creative impulse, the parent of the arts. Love sharpens the senses and heightens the perceptions. Biron, converted from being "love's whip" to being a lover, is eloquent in love's defence:

But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone immured in the brain;
But, with the motion of all elements,
Courses as swift as thought in every power,
And gives to every power a double power,
Above their functions and their offices.
It adds a precious seeing to the eye;
A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind;
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound
When the suspicious head of theft is stopp'd;
Love's feeling is more soft and sensible
Than are the tender horns of cockled snails;
Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste.
For valour, is not Love a Hercules,
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?
Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair;
And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Make heaven drowsy with the harmony.
Never durst poet touch a pen to write
Until his ink were tempered with Love's sighs;
O, then his lines would ravish savage ears,
And plant in tyrants mild humility. (LLL, IV, iii, 327 - 349).

Into the argument enters, of course, the lasting and inevitable confusion between love and lust. Some writers conclude that all sexual "love" is perversely so called, and should only be labelled lust.³⁹ But lovers themselves tend to think their love pure and chaste, even when they are in the process of seducing a maid whom they will afterwards discard, as in the case of Bertram and Diana in All's Well That Ends Well. The most humble and self-effacing of lovers, however remote his hopes, is still consciously or unconsciously reaching for the cure of consummation: Dan Cupid is inevitably not only "regent of love-rhymes,

lord of folded arms," but also "prince of plackets, king of codpieces." (LLL, III, i, 183, 186).

A lover, then, was a highly conventionalized figure in Renaissance literature. But in this case the convention could be a salutary influence as well as a stultifying one. Ever since lovers had been pining they had also been ridiculous, and a vigorous growth of satire co-existed with the conventional pattern. The very rigidity of the pattern provided a whole series of jokes that could range from the extremes of conformity to the extremes of deviation. Touchstone and Silvius appear in the same play, and both their loves end in marriage. To season the panegyrics on beauty, there are brutally frank depictions of ugliness. To alleviate the vows of eternal fidelity, there is an implicit affirmation of Ovid's view, "Iuppiter ex alto periuria ridet amantum."⁴⁰ The Petrarchan convention gives rise to an alternative convention which asserts "my mistress' eyes are nothing like the Sun."

Again, because the lover was such a readily recognizable figure, an added plot interest could often be provided in a situation where a merely lustful man assumes the usual romantic trappings, and appears as a wolf in lover's clothing. In Shirley's The Witty Fair One, for example, the philanderer, Fowler, counterfeits a lover's disease, and gets a fake physician to enumerate dangerous symptoms in front of Fowler's intended victim, and to prescribe the only effective cure -- the bed of the beloved.

A great use of the love-at-first-sight convention to the dramatist is the opportunity it gives him for speedy disposal, at the end of the play, of secondary characters, who are summarily paired off. Remembering that love, if it happens at all, conventionally happens at first

sight, we find it easier to accept these matches: the dramatist is guilty only of introducing a happy coincidence, and not of psychological violence to his characters. Celia's convenient marriage with Oliver, for instance, at the end of As You Like It, is dismissed thus:

Your brother and my sister no sooner met but they look'd; no sooner look'd but they lov'd; no sooner lov'd but they sigh'd; no sooner sigh'd but they ask'd one another the reason; no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy; and in these degrees have made a pair of stairs to marriage.

Such a match is certainly introduced for the purpose of a happy ending. But, other than its rapidity, there is nothing surprising about it, since it exactly follows the recognized pattern, from the pair's contracting the infection and showing the symptoms, to diagnosing the disease and seeking the cure.

Despite the love malady's being so apparent, the fact that it is considered as a disease that must be cured like any other frequently makes for an additional plot interest, since the complaint must be diagnosed before it can be cured, and the lover is usually secretive and seldom co-operative. "For the most part, he that is sick of this disease, does not wish to be cured of it." (Erotomania, p. 195). Hence a dramatist can add a sort of detective-story interest in the diagnosis of the lover -- which may flatter his audience, since they usually get the answer before the other characters. This is where the trickery comes in with pictures and pulse-counts to get the lover to betray his sickness.

But the chief dramatic use of the love convention in the drama is the battle between love and reason. Love is powerful enough and sympathetic enough to be a fit opponent for right reason: and the conflict is freely exploited in cases where the lover falls in love with a lady who

is above his station, who is married to his master or his friend, or who is too close a blood relation. On the whole, when love drives its victims to extremes of immorality or crime, the lover tends to get off lightly in the resolution, for his disease is considered as an extenuating circumstance.

In its universality, in its conformity and diversity, the behaviour it provokes and the calamities it causes, love as a theme is absurd enough and pathetic enough for comedy or tragedy.

FOOTNOTES

¹Cyril Tourneur, The Revenger's Tragedy, II, ii. The Works of Cyril Tourneur, ed. Allardyce Nicol (London, 1929).

²The Insatiate Countess, II, iii, 43. The Works of John Marston, ed. A. H. Bullen (London, 1887).

³Middleton and Rowley, The Changeling, V, ii, 150. Ed. N. W. Bawcutt, (London, 1958).

⁴1541. Scholars Facsimiles and Reprints (New York, 1937). p. 6.

⁵William Shakespeare, Love's Labour's Lost, IV, iii, 292. The Complete Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare, ed. W. A. Neilson and C. J. Hill (Cambridge, U.S.A., 1942).

⁶Shakespeare, Venus and Adonis, I. 794.

⁷Ibid., Twelfth Night, I, iii, 76.

⁸Ibid., Venus and Adonis, I. 149.

⁹Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy, Vol. III, p. 171. Ed. A. R. Shilleto, 3 vols. (London, 1903 - 04). References to Burton are given by volume and page number of the Shilleto edition. I have used the translations from the edition of Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York, 1951).

¹⁰Ben Jonson, Volpone, II, ii. The Works of Ben Jonson, ed. W. Gifford, with introduction and appendices by F. Cunningham, 9 vols. (London, 1875).

¹¹John Lyly, Campaspe, V, iii, 11.

¹²Twelfth Night, I, iii, 85.

¹³Shakespeare, II Henry IV, IV, iii, 100.

¹⁴See J. Livingston Lowes, "The Loveres Maladye of Hereos," MP, XI (1913).

- ¹⁵ James Ferrand, (Jaques Ferrand), Erotomania, or A Treatise Discouring of the Essence, Causes, Symptomes, Prognosticks, and Cure of Love or Erotique Melancholy. (Oxford, 1640). pp. 260 - 261.
- ¹⁶ Love's Labour's Lost, IV, iii, 97.
- ¹⁷ John Webster, The White Devil, V, vi, 240. The Complete Works of John Webster, ed. F. L. Lucas (London, 1927).
- ¹⁸ Burton, Anatomy, III, p. 222.
- ¹⁹ M. Andreus Laurentius (Andre Du Laurens), A Discourse of the Preservation of the Sight: of Melancholic Diseases: of Rheumes, and of Old Age. Trans. Richard Surphlet, (London, 1599). Shakespeare Association Facsimile no. 15, (London, 1938).
- ²⁰ See Lawrence Babb, The Elizabethan Malady, (East Lansing, 1951), p. 134. I am indebted to Babb's discussion of Love Melancholy for much of the material in this chapter.
- ²¹ Erotomania, p. 10, 30.
- ²² Timothy Bright, A Treatise of Melancholy, (London, 1586). Facsimile Text Society (New York, 1940). p. 99.
- ²³ As You Like It, III, v, 81.
- ²⁴ Treatise of Melancholy, p. 47.
- ²⁵ Beaumont and Fletcher, Philaster, IV, i. The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher, ed. Arnold Glover, 10 vols. (Cambridge, 1905).
- ²⁶ See Bright, p. 158.
- ²⁷ See Laurentius, p. 130, and Ferrand, p. 132.
- ²⁸ Love's Labour's Lost, I, ii, 90.
- ²⁹ Twelfth Night, II, iv, 116. For the common connection of the colour yellow with jealousy, see under yellow in the Oxford English Dictionary.

³⁰ E.g., see Shirley, The Witty Fair One, II, ii. "Another maid that hath the grudging of the greensickness, and needs a man to recover her;" and Burton, "The greensickness therefore [because the liver doth not perform his part] oft^h happeneth to young women." (III, 153).

³¹ Shakespeare, Two Gentlemen of Verona, II, iv, 141.

³² The Insatiate Countess, II, i, 99.

³³ Two Gentlemen of Verona, II, i, 72.

³⁴ Insatiate Countess, III, iv, 64.

³⁵ II, i, 5. Stage directions mine.

³⁶ (Ditchling Common, Sussex, 1928).

³⁷ Bacon, Essays "Of Love," and "Of Marriage and Single Life."

³⁸ Commendatory verse to Ferrand's Erotomania.

³⁹ See, e.g., Phineas Fletcher, Purple Island, III, 10, h.

⁴⁰ Ovid, Ars Amatoria.

CHAPTER II

FORD AND BURTON

From the previous chapter it emerges that knowledge of the love malady, and references to it, both serious and jocular, were ^{commonplace} ~~ubiquitous~~ in Elizabethan literature. John Ford would not have had to read Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy in order to be familiar with the language of the love convention: he would have absorbed this as a matter of course from his reading, play-going and everyday conversation.

At the same time, there can be no doubt of the deep impression the Anatomy made on him. It seems that Burton, though writing in the seclusion of Oxford on a subject which his London contemporaries would consider banal,¹ yet produced the definitive text on melancholy of all kinds, and, so far as John Ford was concerned, love melancholy in particular. In Part III of the Anatomy Burton combines a medical discussion of the love malady with a host of examples drawn indiscriminately from history and fiction; and from the tangle of examples and the multiplicity of symptoms, there emerges, if not order, at least a pattern. This summing up of the whole tradition was to Ford an impressive document, perhaps affording him the first authoritative statement of the theory that was the basis of the allusive poetry and satire of love.

Though love melancholy had ceased to be common as a central theme in the drama by the time the Anatomy was published in 1621, Ford evidently became so absorbed in the subject that he considered it worth a revival. By 1628, when the Anatomy was in its third edition, he had produced his

state that can cause men to degenerate into beasts; and the statement is also the key to what Burton and Ford have in common: an interest that amounts almost to an obsession with pathological states of mind. The body may suffer as a result, but it is the mind that is sick, and the mind that must receive treatment rather than the body, if a cure is to be effected. Speaking more specifically of love melancholy, Corax has an authoritative speech with which to wind up his elaborate Masque of Melancholy:

Love is the tyrant of the heart; it darkens
Reason, confounds discretion; deaf to counsel,
It runs a headlong course to desperate madness.
(III, iii, p. 69).

This might be a brief abstract of Burton's whole section on love melancholy, from its definition to its prognostics.

Ford takes pains to be medically accurate in his discussions of melancholy. According to orthodox medical theory, fear and sorrow are the two chief perturbations of the mind that attend melancholy. Burton speaks of sorrow as "the mother and daughter of melancholy, her epitome, symptom and chief cause," and of fear as a continual companion to sorrow, "an assistant and a principal agent in procuring of this mischief, a cause and symptom as the other."⁵ Even Hamlet, Shakespeare's melancholy prince, does not exhibit fear and sorrow to any excessive extent.⁶ But Ford is careful not to leave out these decisive passions. Palador, for instance, shows a morbid interest, prompted by his fears, in what others think of him, and holds a council at which all present have to speak their several opinions of him; and Eroclea speaks for all the sufferers from melancholy when she describes herself as "worn away with fears and sorrows." (IV, iii, p. 84).

And Ford's reliance on the Anatomy goes beyond the use of scientific

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And Ford's reliance on the Anatomy goes beyond the use of scientific

data. Occasionally Ford may actually take a passage from the Anatomy and turn it into verse, or at least derive from it the core or imagery of his speech. For instance, a passage near the beginning of the section on Love Melancholy seems to have appealed to Ford: Burton is speaking of Natural Love, or the natural affinity that is observable between inanimate objects.

This love is manifest, I say, in inanimate creatures. How comes a loadstone to draw iron to it? jet, chaff? the ground to covet showers, but for Love? No creature, S. Hierom concludes, is to be found, that doth not love something, no stock, no stone, that hath not some feeling of love. 'Tis more eminent in Plants, Herbs, and is especially observed in vegetals; as betwixt the Vine and the Cabbage, betwixt the Vine and the Olive; . . . the Olive and the Myrtle embrace each other, in roots and branches, if they grow near. (III, p. 15).

Such evidence of the universal quality of love, where one object is drawn to another by a natural force and not by any reprehensible concupiscence such is common to man and beast, was evidently too good for Ford to ignore in a play about love melancholy. Thamasta, the haughty cousin to the prince of Cyprus, who has disdained all suitors whom she considers beneath her rank, finds she has fallen in love with Parthenophil, a stranger and, so far as she knows, a nobody. Rather than attribute her unexpected and uncharacteristic passion to motions of lust, she draws on Burton's Natural Love for her imagery:

The constant loadstone and the steel are found
In several mines; yet there is such a league
Between these minerals, as if one vein
Of earth had nourish'd both. The gentle myrtle
Is not engraft upon an olive's stock;
Yet Nature hath between them lock'd a secret
Of sympathy, that, being planted near,
They will, both in their branches and their roots,
Embrace each other; twines of ivy round
The well-grown oak; the vine doth court the elm;
Yet these are different plants.

And with this evidence she can conclude at last with an attribution of her actions to fate, which is so often cited as the motive force of passions in Ford's plays:

True love may blush, when shame repents too late:
But in all actions, nature yields to fate. (III, ii, p. 57).

In a comparison of the two passages one must almost conclude that Ford had the Anatomy open in front of him, and was running his finger down the page as he wrote.

It is tempting to assign one verbal trick that Ford uses in The Lady's Trial to Burton's influence. No one can read The Anatomy without noticing Burton's characteristic and often amusing use of "&c." It is his usual termination of a sentence that is becoming too frank, or an anecdote that has reached the seamy incident. "Great men, and great soldiers, are commonly great -- &c., 'tis approved, they are good doers. Mars and Venus are equally balanced in their actions" (III, p. 314). Such a sentence is typical, and always has a comic effect. Fulgoso tries the same joke when he is reconciling himself to his losses at gaming:

Money is trash, and ladies are et caeteras,
Play's play, luck's luck, fortune's an -- I know what.
(II, i, p. 31).

Besides these verbal echoes, Ford shows his dependence on Burton in lifting whole anecdotes or descriptions from the Anatomy and retelling them or presenting them on the stage. For instance, Rhetias tells Cuculus of the "monstrous sow-pig," which, having sucked a brach, thereafter went hunting with the hounds. This is taken straight from the Anatomy.⁷ But much more obvious, of course, is the borrowing that Ford does not attempt to conceal in the Masque of Melancholy, the device Corax

uses to get Palador to reveal his malady.

Corax is the director and adaptor of this play-within-a-play, which, as in Hamlet, is used as a means of getting a central character to reveal his secret. The cast come on one by one, each portraying a kind of mental disease, while Corax gives a commentary and Palador peruses the "plot," a piece of paper where is "express'd/In kind, what shall be now express'd in action." This, it has been suggested, is formed of extracts from the Anatomy, since it allows Palador to check what he sees with what he can read.⁸

One example of Ford's -- or Corax's -- handling of Burton's descriptions will suffice here. Burton describes Lycanthropia⁹ in these terms:

Lycanthropia, which Avicenna calls Cucubuth, others Wolf-madness, when men run howling about graves and fields in the night, and will not be persuaded but that they are wolves, or some such beasts. . . . They lie hid most part all day, and go abroad in the night, barking, howling, at graves and deserts; they have usually hollow eyes, scabbed legs and thighs, very dry and pale, saith Altomarus.

Accordingly Rhetias, the first of the masquers, makes his entrance with "his face whited, black shag hair, long nails; with a piece of raw meat," and speaks his lines:

Bow, wow! wow, wow! the moon's eclipsed; I'll to the churchyard and sup. Since I turn'd wolf, I bark, and howl and dig up graves; I will never have the sun shine again: 'tis mid-night, deep dark midnight, -- get a prey, and fall to -- I have catch'd thee now. -- Arre! (III, iii, p. 64).

And so are represented in turn hydrophobia, dotage, phrenitis, hypochondria and St. Vitus' Dance. The whole masque is certainly, at least from a modern point of view, no great dramatic success. The mixture of apparent learning with crude caricature that leaves no time for subtlety

is not one that appeals to us. The Masque is more or less gratuitous to the plot, too, since the audience, if they had not guessed for themselves that Palador was suffering from love melancholy, had had the fact revealed to them in the scene between him and Rhetias, where they hear all about the lost Eroclea. Palador, however, perhaps because of the melancholy man's morbid absorption in his own disease, finds the Masque of Melancholy entertaining enough.

Ford's borrowings from Burton which I have discussed so far, though they establish, I think, Ford's intimate knowledge of the Anatomy and readiness to pirate bits and pieces from it, have not been of any such major import as to change the impact of Ford's drama. But the influence, or perhaps one should call it affinity of outlook, goes a good deal further.

Some of the more savage humorous passages in Ford's plays look very like passages in the Anatomy where Burton is in his cynical mood of sparing no details. For instance, among the symptoms of love which Burton enumerates is one which shows very clearly the subjection of the lover's reason -- that he adores his mistress no matter how ugly she may be, and thinks all her faults are virtues.

Every lover admires his mistress, though she be very deformed of her self, ill-favoured, wrinkled, pimples, pale, red, yellow, tanned, tallow-faced, . . . be crooked, dry, bald, goggle-ey'd, blear-ey'd, or with staring eyes, she looks like a squis'd cat, hold her head still awry, heavy, dull, hollow-ey'd, black or yellow about the eyes, . . . gubber-tushed, rotten teeth, black, uneven, brown teeth, beetle-browed, a Witch's beard, her breath stink winter and summer. . .

and so on and so on; and to push the point home, Burton describes the reaction that would normally be provoked by such a hag, who

to thy judgement looks like a merd in a lanthorn, whom thou couldest not fancy for a world, but hatest, loathest, and wouldest have spit in her face, or blow thy nose in her bosom, the very antidote of love in another man, dowdy, a slut, a scold, nasty, rank, rammy, filthy, beastly quean, dishonest peradventure. . . . (III, pp. 178 - 179).

The passage is a memorable one, if for its sheer inventiveness rather than for its charity. Ford, too, seemed to take some pride in his abusive powers. There is a passage in The Lover's Melancholy in which Rhetias and Corax indulge in a protracted slanging match for no dramatic purpose, apparently, other than to afford amusement, for Corax concludes it with the explanation, "Tut! these are but good morrows between us."¹⁰ But the theme of the unreasonable passion for an ugly woman Ford found suitable for expansion in the comic subplot of The Fancies, Chaste and Noble. Biron, who falls in love with a relatively ugly woman in spite of himself and then composes sonnets in praise of her beauty, is being unreasonable in the same way; but Rosaline is at least young, and probably only ugly in so far as she is dark; Otter, in Jonson's Epicoene, is explicit about his wife's repulsiveness, but makes it quite clear that he married her for money. Ford's Secco in The Fancies, Chaste and Noble, on the other hand, an eighteen-year-old barber, is so seriously enamoured of his sixty-odd-year-old spouse, Morosa, that he becomes furiously jealous of her on his very wedding day. When her letter appointing the wedding-day is first delivered, he speaks of her in just the manner Burton describes fond lovers speaking of their mistresses. "The glory of beauty, Morosa, the fairest fair . . . Divine Morosa!" -- while Spadone, standing by, ironically repeats,

Fairest fair, quoth'a! so is an old rotten coddled mungrel, parcel bawd, parcel midwife; all the marks are quite out of

her mouth; not the stump of a tooth left in her head, to mumble the curd of a posset. (I, ii, 233).

Then, believing he has been mocked for being a eunuch, he suddenly vents his disgust on the barber himself:

I will blow my nose in your casting-bottle, break the teeth of thy combs, poison thy camphire balls, slice out thy towels with thine own razor, be-tallow thy tweezes, and urine in thy bason.

A few paragraphs on from his description of the ugly woman, Burton speaks of the ridiculous terms of endearment in which the irrational lover addresses his mistress. And in their next scene together, Secco and Morosa are calling each other duckling, honeysuckle, pigeon, cat-a-mountain, sweet-briar and honey. (II, ii).

The lesson is driven home by Romanello who, in his disguise as a wit, uses the couple as instance of a general maxim that agrees with Burton:

Should love and judgment meet
The old, the fool, the ugly, and deformed,
Could never be beloved; for example,
Behold these two, this madam and this shaver. (III, iii, p. 278).

"I do defy thee; am I old or ugly?" Morosa challenges him; -- and finally to reinforce the repugnance she provokes, she is made to say she will prove she has teeth if he will put his fingers in her gums. If there had been any stage directions to the play that described how the characters should be presented, Ford need only have made an extract from Burton for his description of Morosa.

It is in Bassanes in The Broken Heart that we see most clearly how much Ford derived from Burton in his delineation of character. Bassanes is in fact a dramatisation of the section on Jealousy, which Burton calls

"a bastard-branch, or kind of Love-Melancholy." So Bassanes is from the first characterised as bearing Penthea "a kind of monster-love."¹¹

Burton stresses the strength of this passion over others, and its violence even when compared to ordinary love melancholy.

'Tis a more vehement passion, a more furious perturbation, a bitter pain, a fire, a pernicious curiosity, a gall corrupting the honey of our life, madness, vertigo, plague, hell, they are more than ordinarily disquieted, they lose the blessing of peace of mind. (III, p. 329).

And so the condition of Bassanes, of all Ford's serious characters, is the most violently pathological, and the pains of his malady are more furious even than the pains of love. "My agonies are infinite," he exclaims, in an exit line. (II, i, p. 242). And later he urges Ithocles,

Rip my bosom up,
I'll stand the execution with a constancy;
This torture is insufferable. (III, ii, p. 266).

As for the causes of his passion, Bassanes is in a situation which is most likely to predispose men to jealousy. He lives in Sparta, a country south of the Alps, where, as Burton says, "men are more hot, lascivious, and jealous than such as live in the North." (III, p. 303). And he is a nobleman with plenty of money who does not have to work for his living. "Though they be rich, keep sumptuous tables, be nobly allied, yet they are most miserable, they are more than ordinarily suspicious." (III, p. 321).

But there are more immediate causes of his jealousy than these. Burton notes that the beauty of a wife may itself incite jealousy — he cites Venus as giving Vulcan ample cause for his suspicion. And it is Penthea's beauty which first infects Bassanes; Orgilus, in his description of the marriage of Bassanes and Penthea, outlines the process with

both scientific and psychological accuracy:

Bassanes,
 The man that calls her wife, considers truly
 What heaven of perfections he is lord of,
 By thinking fair Penthea his; this thought
 Begets a kind of monster-love, which love
 Is nurse unto a fear so strong, and servile,
 As brands all dotage with a jealousy.
 All eyes who gaze upon that shrine of beauty,
 He doth resolve, do homage to the miracle;
 Some one, he is assured, may now or then
 (If opportunity but sort) prevail:
 So much, out of a self-unworthiness,
 His fears transport him! -- not that he finds cause
 In her obedience, but his own distrust. (I, i. p. 219).

-- and in this last observation Ford has made sure we realize that Bassanes' fear is causeless, and is therefore that special kind of fear that is the cause and symptom of melancholy, in this case Jealous Melancholy.

But perhaps the major cause of Bassanes' condition is one that Burton emphasizes -- that he is apparently impotent, or at least sterile. Burton has many examples of jealousy, both with and without reason for it, in old or impotent men, and quotes Nevisanus, who "will have barrenness to be a main cause of jealousy."¹² This physical defect in Bassanes is not stated baldly, as, for instance, it is in the case of Octavio in The Fancies, but it is conveyed indirectly, in hints and allusions, as it would probably be in actuality. In the first introduction to the situation Orgilus says that Bassanes calls Penthea wife: but this could be only the prejudice of a superseded suitor. Then, answering Bassanes' furious abuse of her, Grausis taunts him with a possibility of Penthea's being pregnant, (II, i, p. 240)

If your fresh lady breed young bones, my lord!
 Would not a chopping boy do you good at heart?
 But, as you said --

-- the jibe would be ineffective if Bassanes could think the child were his own. Bassanes himself wishes that he could preserve her "in fruition/As in devotion."¹³ Penthea, when she is making her will, bequeathes her youth to "virgin-wives" and "married maids;"¹⁴ and when she is raving, she thinks of the "pretty prattling babes" she might have had, and concludes that if she is past child-bearing "'tis not my fault."¹⁵ Finally, Orgilus uses, as a metaphor for the whole tragic triangle, "Thou barren rock,/ By thee we have been split in ken of harbour."¹⁶

The causes, then, of Bassanes' condition are carefully delineated after Burton's fashion. The symptoms tally just as accurately. In his general demeanour, Burton says, the jealous man may exhibit "strange gestures of staring, frowning, rolling of eyes, menacing, ghastly looks, broken pace." Bassanes, rushing in on Ithocles and Penthea, brandishing a poniard with indiscriminate fury, by his extravagant gestures prompts Hemophil's mocking exclamation, "How he stares,/Struts, puffs, and sweats! Most admirable lunacy!"¹⁷ He is tormented by fears and suspicions, to the extent that, as Burton predicted, he bribes servants to watch Penthea when he is unable to do so himself, and flies into a passion when Grausis falls asleep at her post.

Above all, his suspicions are general and indiscriminate, and so the more irrational. Adultery is a bugbear that he sees in every glance. Burton's jealous man speculates, "May not a man steal in at the window, with a ladder of ropes?" -- and Bassanes gives orders that the window next the street should be blocked, with the jealous man's obsession for making assurance doubly sure.

There's a lust
 Committed by the eye, that sweats and travails,
 Plots, wakes, contrives, till the deformed bearwhelp,
 Adultery, be lick'd into the act,
 The very act: -- that light shall be damm'd up. (II, i, p. 236).

Burton speaks of this kind of husband "accusing and suspecting not strangers only, but Brothers and Sisters, Father and Mother. . ." Ford takes this sentence as his text for the incident where Bassanes directs his jealousy against Ithocles when he arranges to meet Penthea in private. "Why may not I be there?" he wonders.

Hum! -- he's her brother.
 Brothers and sisters are but flesh and blood. (II, ii, p. 247).

One of the distinguishing features of the jealous malady, Burton notes, is that it comprehends the two extremes of violence and affection. "He will sometimes. . .curse, threaten, brawl, scold, fight; and sometimes again flatter, and speak fair, ask forgiveness, kiss and coll, condemn his rashness and folly." So Bassanes, when he has just been giving strict orders for the further confinement of Penthea and considering the general profligacy of woman, still greets Penthea with extravagant terms of endearment, and begs her to

Choose thine own recreations; be a queen
 Of what delights thou fanciest best, what company,
 What place, what times, (II, i, p. 239)

and wants to dress her up in all the jewels and finery he thinks will match her beauty.

Burton is concerned to portray the extremes of this bastard-branch of love melancholy, and as a result of his throwing in examples of all sorts of exaggerated behaviour, his account becomes bizarre and often amusing. Ford, too, was concerned to show the extremes of this

perturbation of the mind, and it is true that often Bassanes hovers on the edge of being merely ridiculous. Yet Ford does save him from being a farcical character. One reason is that our sympathy is never entirely alienated by seeing him actually mistreat Penthea. His extravagant language and behaviour, which is certainly manifest, is all directed against someone else -- Grausis or Phulas or Ithocles -- and mostly when she is not present or out of hearing. It is evident that in fact her presence has always a salutary effect on him. When Ithocles is rebuking him for his rude interruption and slanderous accusations, Penthea intercedes, and Bassanes is quickly calmed:

Light of beauty,
Deal not ungently with a desperate wound!
No breach of reason dares make war with her
Whose looks are sovereignty, whose breath is balm.
(III, ii, p. 265).

Though Burton gives authority for it, he never lays a violent hand on her, "thumps her sides, drags her about," as, for instance, Soranzo does to Annabella in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore; nor does he even abuse her to her face. So far as we know, he is justified in his claim when he says

I never gave you one ill word; say, did I?
Indeed I did not. (III, ii, p. 266).

Bassanes is one of the characters for whom Ford ordained a cure. This cure is partly self-applied and partly administered by another power -- and both methods are those advocated by Burton. Bassanes himself decides to reform after his outrageous interruption on Penthea and her brother, and to exercise the great remedy for jealousy -- patience. From then on he is convalescent, if not yet cured. Finally (but this is after Penthea has died, and so the occasion of his jealousy has been

removed) an external remedy is applied after Burton's specification that the jealous man should "be still busied about some matters of importance" in order to drive out the fears and sorrows of jealousy. Calantha ordains in her dying instructions that he be made Sparta's marshal,¹⁸ for

The multitudes of high employments could not
But set a peace to private griefs.

Ford, though he has closely followed Burton in his characterization, has managed to convey the torments of jealousy while he skirts the absurdity. And we are satisfied that Bassanes, unlike Soranzo, should survive, in the general calamity that overtakes the members of the court of Sparta at the end of the play: in his case the anguish of his passion has been itself punishment enough for its effects.

The Anatomy of Melancholy was to Ford, then, a source-book of ideas, anecdotes and scientific material which he found suitable for inclusion in his own writings. His plays show he was influenced by Burton, to a greater or lesser extent, in his language, in such interludes as the Masque of Melancholy and the marriage to the ugly woman, and even in his conception of character.

In order to explore further the relation between Ford and Burton it is perhaps better to abandon the term 'influence,' and to consider rather why the Anatomy of Melancholy should have interested Ford to such an extent: to consider, in fact, the affinity in outlook that existed between the erudite Oxford divine and the sophisticated playwright of Middle Temple.

There is a sentence in Timothy Bright's authoritative Treatise

of Melancholy which states the basis of Elizabethan faculty psychology:

It shall be necessary for you to understand, what the familiarity is betwixt mind and body: how it affecteth it, and is affected of it again. (p. 33).

This sentence would do as a text for The Anatomy of Melancholy as well as for many other Renaissance medical books. And the basic affinity that exists between Burton and Ford lies in the fact that it could also serve as the underlying principle of Ford's plays.

One can hardly read the plays without noticing the extreme physicality of Ford's characters. Not only Ford but the characters themselves seem to be obsessed with the physical manifestations of their psychological states. For instance, Friar Bonaventura, as he hands Giovanni a letter from Annabella, can accurately predict a physical as well as an emotional reaction:

The blood's yet seething hot, that will anon
Be frozen harder than congealed coral; (TP, V, iii, p. 192).

And, sure enough, by the next line the reaction has occurred, for he asks, "Why d'ye change colour, son?" When Caraffa, in Love's Sacrifice, has been whipped to a fury of wrath and jealousy against his wife and her lover by D'Avolos, he speaks of his own complexion in a manner that seems dramatically inappropriate to us now:

The ashy paleness of my cheek
Is scarleted in ruddy flakes of wrath. (IV, i, p. 75).

How does he know? we are tempted to ask. When King Henry hears that the man he thought was his best friend is in fact a traitor, he surprisingly calls for a light, and asks his attendants to look if there is blood left in his face -- whereupon they confirm, "You alter strangely, sir."¹⁹ The ultimate in this kind of physical self-consciousness occurs

when Calantha, hearing the news successively of the deaths of her father, her friend, and her betrothed, can with enormous fortitude continue dancing, controlling not only her emotions but the physical signs of them.

Calantha. So, let us breathe a while. --(music ceases)--

-- Hath not this motion

Rais'd fresher colours in our cheeks?

Nearchus. Sweet princess,

A perfect purity of blood enamels

The beauty of your white. (BH, V, ii, p. 309).

It is no wonder that such a feat should prove fatal. In her case we have little doubt that Ford means the breaking of her heart to be taken literally. And when Orgilus exclaims,

Passion, O be contain'd! My very heart-strings

Are on the tenters, (BH, I, iii, p. 232)

the metaphor is almost a fact. It becomes apparent, in fact, that for Ford's characters a reference to their bodily condition is as valid a means of expressing emotion as any other, and one that is least likely to be feigned.

Ford's language of violent passion tends to be in terms of physical violence. This becomes evident if we compare, for instance, the speeches of a jealous husband of Ford's with one of Shakespeare's. When Othello is convinced of Desdemona's infidelity, he speaks of her body as

a cistern for foul toads

To knot and gender in. (IV, ii, 61).

All the physical revulsion is there, but it is expressed allusively. Soranzo, on the other hand, when he finds that Annabella is already pregnant by a lover, speaks in these terms:

Could none but I

Be pick'd out to be cloak to your close tricks,

Your belly-sports? -- Now I must be the dad

To all that gallimaufry that is stuff'd

In thy corrupted bastard-bearing womb! (TP, IV, iii, p. 177).

Here the physical allusions are explicit, almost technical.

The same sort of physical explicitness appears in the action of the plays as in the language. The deaths that Ford portrays are very often particularly gruesome for this reason: Orgilus is executed by being bled to death -- on the stage, and with all the clinical appurtenances. Fernando takes poison in the tomb of Bianca, and exults as the poison tears each joint, splits his heart and gall, and tortures every vein, concluding:

I come, Bianca -- cruel torment, feast,
Feast on, do! -- duke, farewell. Thus I -- hot flames! --
Conclude my love, -- and seal it in my bosom! -- oh! Dies
(LS, V. iii, p. 105).

The last line is indicative of what Ford is trying to do -- to convey the magnitude of love and grief with a violence of physical anguish.

But this violence is not quite the same as that which abounds in the plays of Webster or Tourneur. There the horrors are accumulated for their own sake, and do not represent a mental state, as Ford's violence tends to do. In Ford's plays there is no such deliberately administered torture as the Duchess of Malfi suffers; Ford's characters suffer most from those who can inflict the greatest mental anguish: their torments are self-inflicted, or inflicted by those they love. Orgilus chooses and administers his own bloody death, and it is one that fits the torment of his frustrated situation. Annabella is murdered in one sense by Giovanni, in another by their incestuous love. Ford's tragedies demonstrate, on both the literal and the psychological plane, the belief that "on finit toujours par tuer la chose qu'on aime."²⁰ One can reasonably claim that Ford's bleeding hearts, ulcerous maws, leprous souls and

mouldy maidenheads do not proceed only from a love of sensationalism, but from the same conviction in the inter-connection of body and mind that made him choose the Anatomy as a principal source-book. The affinity that exists between Ford and a medical writer may explain, if it does not excuse, the more violent passages in his plays.

Perhaps where Ford's clinical approach is most decisive is in the conduct of the plots themselves. His plots are very often comparable with a medical case history. The Lover's Melancholy is again the most obvious example. Here the whole story is based on the cure of two men in a pathological condition: Palador, a victim of love melancholy, and Meleander, who suffers from melancholy caused by sorrow. They are treated, partly with physic by a skilled physician, and ultimately by the method which Burton recommends as the last and best -- removal of the cause. When Eroclea is restored to the prince and to her father, Palador is cured by possession of his lost beloved and Meleander by reunion with his daughter and reinstatement in his former position. Corax, the physician, plays, in fact, something like the god-like role of the psychologist in The Cocktail Party.

The Queen is another play that centres on the cure of the pathological condition of a central character. Alphonso, we are shown at the beginning of the play, is "drown'd/ In melancholy and sour discontent."²¹ Had Burton had the diagnosing of him, he might have classified him as a sufferer from love melancholy in defect, as Giovanni, with his atheist tendencies, is in some respects a sufferer from religious melancholy in defect. For Alphonso is such a violent misogynist that he turns to treason rather than submit to being ruled by a queen. When he is reprieved

from execution by her love, and marries her, he refuses to live with her, at first temporarily; but then he allows the time to extend itself from a week to a month, exulting in his superiority over the common run of men who are subject to women. A husband who acts in this way is obviously sick, and in this case the physician figure who undertakes the cure is his friend Muretto. Muretto hits upon the elaborate device of curing misogyny by jealousy -- by 'forcing out one nail with another,' as Burton recommends for the treatment of the passions.²²

He therefore plays the part of an Iago, and convinces Alphonso that the Queen is being unfaithful to him, at the same time extolling her beauty. Alphonso now becomes as jealous as he had previously been woman-hating, and determines that in spite of his love she must die for her infidelity unless a champion can uphold her honour against him. At the appointed day and hour, Muretto himself, to Alphonso's amazement, appears among the other champions. He now explains his whole elaborate treatment of Alphonso's case; thus the Queen's honour is no longer in question, and the king, who has been purged of his misogyny, now finds that there is no occasion for his jealousy; and there is nothing to prevent them from living healthily ever after.

On the other hand, where treatment is not available, or the cure cannot be procured for Ford's suffering characters, tragedy results. Orgilus and Fernando must die, one way or another, because their love malady does not respond to treatment by counsel, and possession of their loves is impossible. The love of Giovanni ends in destruction because, although he had taken the right cure for his disease, such a cure in his case could only be the "mad physic" of which Burton speaks, the physic

which prescribes a treatment against the laws of morality.²³

As Burton divides The Anatomy of Melancholy chiefly according to causes and cures of melancholy, so does Ford frequently construct his plots on the same principle. Both are concerned with aberrations from the normal state of mind, and with the means to restore normality.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Shakespeare was writing his comedies satirizing the love convention in the 1590's. Marston's Malcontent was published in 1604. The subject was no longer quite topical by 1621, when The Anatomy of Melancholy first appeared. And we may suppose that Ford's The Lover's Melancholy would have been a survival, if not actually a revival.

² S. Blain Ewing, Burtonian Melancholy in the Plays of John Ford (Princeton, 1940).

³ The Tragic Muse of John Ford (Stanford, 1944). Also in two articles: "Burton's Influence on Ford's The Lover's Melancholy," SP, XXXIII (1936); and "Ford's Tragedy of Love Melancholy," Englische Studien, XCIII (1939).

⁴ LM, III, ii, p. 52. The Works of John Ford, ed. Alexander Dyce, 3 vol. (London, 1869). My references to Ford are given by play (rather than volume), act and scene, and page number of the Dyce edition. I have abbreviated the titles of the plays as follows:

BH	<u>The Broken Heart</u>	LT	<u>The Lady's Trial</u>
FCN	<u>The Fancies, Chaste and Noble</u>	PW	<u>Perkin Warbeck</u>
LM	<u>The Lover's Melancholy</u>	Q	<u>The Queen</u>
LS	<u>Love's Sacrifice</u>	TP	<u>'Tis Pity She's a Whore</u>

⁵ Anatomy, I, p. 298, 301.

⁶ See Louise Turner Forest, "A Caveat for Critics against invoking Elizabethan Psychology," PMLA, LVI (1946).

⁷ LM, I, ii, p. 21; Anatomy, I, p. 381.

⁸ G. F. Sensabaugh, "Burton's Influence on Ford's The Lover's Melancholy," op. cit.

⁹ I, p. 161. That Lycanthropia was a somewhat esoteric subject, and not part of popular culture, is suggested by the reaction to the mention of it in The Duchess of Malfi: "What's that? I need a dictionary to't." (V, ii, 6).

¹⁰ LM, I, ii, p. 23.

¹¹ Anatomy, III, p. 295; BH. I, i, p. 219.

¹² Anatomy, III, p. 311.

¹³ III, iii, p. 266.

¹⁴ III, v, p. 277.

¹⁵ IV, ii, p. 290.

¹⁶ IV, ii, p. 289. Most of this evidence for Bassanes' sterility was first pointed out by M. E. Cochnower, "John Ford," in Seventeenth Century Studies, ed. Robert Shafer (Princeton, 1933), p. 153.

¹⁷ Anatomy, III, p. 322; BH, III, ii, p. 264.

¹⁸ Anatomy, III, p. 322. BH, V, iii, p. 317.

¹⁹ PW, I, iii, p. 134.

²⁰ See Una Ellis-Fermor, The Jacobean Drama (London, 1936), p. 244.

²¹ The Queen, I, 446. Materialien zur Kunde des alteren Englischen Dramas, XI - XII, ed. W. Bang (Louvain, 1906). No one has disputed Professor Bang's attribution of The Queen to Ford, and in this thesis I treat it as though Ford's authorship were settled. My references to The Queen are by act and line number in the Bang edition. For the sake of consistency, I have modernized the spelling.

²² Anatomy, II, p. 131.

²³ Ibid., III, p. 222.

CHAPTER III

FORD'S USE OF THE LOVE MELANCHOLY CONVENTION

If the medical tradition behind love melancholy influenced Ford in the conduct of his plots, so that they are frequently based on a plan of diagnosis^{of} and therapy for the love malady, so the whole love convention, with all its physiological and literary implications, pervades his plays at all levels. It often determines not only the terminology and turns of phrase in the dialogue, but the particular areas of emphasis within a scene, the satirical direction of the comic interludes, and many of the pivots of the action.

It is also love melancholy -- sexual love viewed as a potentially fatal disease -- which determines whether the plays are to end happily or tragically. If the lover can gain the only effective cure for his malady, possession of the beloved, the result is a happy resolution, and a play that began by raising serious fears for the well-being of the characters ends as a comedy. So The Lover's Melancholy, The Queen, The Fancies, Chaste and Noble, and The Lady's Trial are formed. If this cure, for moral or social reasons, is unattainable, the result is tragedy. The violent resolutions in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, The Broken Heart and Love's Sacrifice might all fit into Burton's discourse on the prognostics of the love melancholy that is not cured.

Since Ford's belief in the seriousness of the love disease was such that he could make it a basis for tragedy, it is hardly surprising that his plays show few signs of anti-Petrarchan sympathies. Most of

his satire, it is true, is directed in some way or other at the conventional lover. But it is clear that the joke lies in the extent of the exaggeration, and not in the attitude that is being exaggerated. Ford shows himself sophisticated in the standard jokes and judgements on love; but then the lovers he satirizes emerge as being not really lovers at all, but men who practise wooing for effect, like Cuculus and Mauruccio, or who woo because they are paid to do so, like Guzman and Fulgoso. In any central issue there is no doubt that Ford believed the lover's condition is tragic rather than absurd.

An enumeration of the characters in Ford's plays who are in a pathological state as a result of love gives some indication of Ford's concentration on the theme of love melancholy. And as we would expect, their pathological mental state is usually reflected in their bodily condition.

In The Lover's Melancholy, Palador's subjection to his disease is shown in his inability to attend to affairs of state, and his perverse preference for solitude. Menaphon, who has been travelling for a year to try to cure his love for the disdainful Thamasta, compares himself with a sick man.

Giovanni, in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, is so altered that his own sister scarcely recognizes him for her brother;

Sure 'tis not he; this is some woeful thing
Wrapp'd up in grief, some shadow of a man.
Alas! he beats his breast, and wipes his eyes,
Drown'd all in tears: methinks I hear him sigh. (I, ii, p. 122).

In The Broken Heart there are several characters who show the ravages of this passion, besides the princess who actually dies of a broken heart.

Orgilus looks "not like the ruins of his youth,/But like the ruins of those ruins." Penthea describes Ithocles as appearing like "the ghost of what he late appear'd" since he fell in love with the princess¹ -- in fact Ithocles is actually bed-ridden with his love malady. Penthea herself is so altered in appearance that even her chief tormentor, Bassanes, is worried at the change.

Fernando, in Love's Sacrifice, falls in love with his friend's wife, Bianca; and the conflict between reason and passion in him is so strong that it changes him to "a lean anatomy."² Malfato, the melancholy lover in The Lady's Trial, who never has the courage to declare his love until the woman he loves is lost to him, shuns company and gives up his normal recreations. In The Queen we find the great general Velasco is helpless in the grip of his love for Salassa, and even his satirical friend Lodovico begins to fear for his life, and to believe him when he says he is "sick indeed, sick to the soul."³ Alphonso, when he is torn between his new love and his new jealousy, is in a dangerous condition between the torment of mind and body:

O I am lost, Muretto, my sunk eyes
Are buried in their hollows: busy thoughts
Press on like legions of infernal hags
To menace my destruction. (IV, 2390).

And other sufferers from the bastard-branch of love melancholy, Bassanes, Soranzo, and Caraffa, suffer equal anguish in their bodies while their reason is in abeyance.

With all these characters in their varying states of love melancholy, Ford has plenty of scope for illustrating and expanding on the love melancholy convention; and he evidently has the terminology, tricks

and controversies of the subject at his fingers' ends.

Ford is, of course, quite familiar with the physiological causes of love. According to good medical tradition his lovers show a preponderance of the sanguine humour. They are subject to the flux of their blood, which has something of the irresistible force of a tide. Fernando, for instance, is desperate because he cannot "sway the float/ Of the unruly faction in my blood."⁴ Ford's characters are constantly in the predicament where the mind is called upon to control a virtually uncontrollable bodily force. Again, the grim justice of the idea that crimes prompted by an overflow of blood must be expiated by an expenditure of blood appeals to Ford, as to his contemporary writers of revenge tragedy. Ferentes, the omnivorous philanderer in Love's Sacrifice, is murdered during the course of a dance with the three women who have borne his children and whom he has since deserted. In his dying speech he acknowledges "My forfeit was in my blood: and my life hath answer'd it." (III, iv, p. 72).

Ford frequently uses the connection between the sanguine humour and its qualities of heat and moisture. Giovanni talks of the "hidden flames" of his love "that almost have consumed me."⁵ Caraffa, in the grip of the contrary pangs of jealousy and love, exclaims,

The icy current of my frozen blood
Is kindled up in agonies as hot
As flames of burning sulphur. Oh my fate! (IS, III, iii, p. 68).

The references to the moisture inherent in desire range from the subtle to the gross. Shaparoona, the bawdy waiting woman in The Queen, progresses in her affair with Mopas because she can claim, "a man might have wrung my smock dripping wet, with the pure sweat that came from my body."

But another elderly woman, Morona, is not so fortunate: her suitor, when he abandons her, deals a further blow to her sexual vanity by calling her "Madam Dry-fist."⁶ We also find Ford making dramatic capital out of these physiological aspects of the love disease; he reinforces a point or gives an ironic twist by a reference to the qualities of the humours. A passage in The Fancies, Chaste and Noble which augments the pattern of suspicion in the play is concerned with Morosa's satisfaction in Castamela's moist palm. This satisfaction can be interpreted as belonging either to a kindly old woman solicitous for a young girl's health, or to a bawd with an eye to a good product. Similarly, Giovanni finds an irony in Annabella's healthy young hand:

Give my your hand: how sweetly life doth run
In these well-colour'd veins! How constantly
These palms do promise health! But I could chide
With nature for this cunning flattery. (TP, V, v, p. 200).

The medically conscious audience would appreciate at once that "nature's flattery," implicit in the hand which promises health and long life, is about to be exposed when Annabella dies --- as a result of the very excess of desire which the same hand also denotes.

Youth, as the age when sexual activity is most prevalent and most easily condoned, frequently enters arguments on love. "Had you youth like mine," Giovanni justifies himself to the horrified friar, "You'd make your love a heaven and her divine." (II, v, p. 146). In Orgilus we see the opposite extreme, for the natural desires of his youth have been violently denied, so that when he turns scholar Tecnicus can speak prophetically:

Neglects in young men of delights and life
Run often to extremities; they care not
For harms to others, who condemn their own. (BH, I, iii, p. 229).

Ford also makes full use --- this time for comic purposes -- of the figure of the aged lover in the characters of Cuculus and Mauruccio, who become lovers 'in the winter of their age.'

Ford has more to say than most of his contemporaries about the state that is contrary to the passion of love, which creates complications by meeting fire with the ice of chastity. In Love's Sacrifice Fernando finds at first that Bianca "is all icy to my fires,/Yet even that ice inflames me in desires."⁷ On the other hand, he himself is found to be "cold as hemlock" when he discovers Fiormonda's love for him. As I show in the next chapter, the theme of the frustration of the warm lover who encounters sexual frigidity is a major one in Ford's plays.

When it comes to diet, as incitement or alleviation to desire, Ford seems to have an eye to a joke or an ironic twist. Guzman, the magniloquent suitor to Amoretta in The Lady's Trial, has to imagine most of the fleshly luxuries he and his love will indulge in, for in actuality he is clothed in rags, and usually hungry; nevertheless, his imagination is a vigorous one:

We will riot
With every change of meats, which may renew
Our blood into a spring, so pure, so high,
That from our pleasures shall proceed a race
Of sceptre-bearing princes, who at once
Must reign in every quarter of the globe. (II, i, p. 30).

In a contemporary audience of 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, anyone versed in dietetics would have appreciated the irony of the doctor's explanation of Annabella's sudden indisposition. He believes that the melon she has eaten has disagreed with her "young stomach:" Annabella, pregnant by her own brother, finds that a remedy for lust does not suit her! He concludes

that she is suffering, of all things, from the green-sickness.

Richardetto. Her sickness is a fulness of her blood--You understand me?

Florio. I do; you counsel well;

And once, within these few days, will so order it

She shall be married ere she know the time. (III, iv, p. 160).

Such an arrangement, of course, suits Annabella very well. The coincidence of a medical therapy with the social remedy that the circumstances require is the kind of neatness that appealed to Ford.

Thomas Elyot, in his Castel of Helth, mentions that men of a sanguine temperament tend to beget boys. Thus the great men and great lovers are expected to be father to boys only; and conversely it could be a reflection on a man's virility if his wife bore him only girls.

Putana taunts Bassanes with the possibility not only of his wife's being pregnant, but of her bearing a "chopping boy" -- the imputation being that he himself could not even get a girl. Guzman, in The Lady's Trial, thinks of himself and Amoretta bringing forth a race of princes, not princesses. When Annabella, taxed by Soranzo for her premature pregnancy, speaks of her lover as

the man,
The more than man, that got this sprightly boy, ---
(For 'tis a boy, and therefore glory, sir,
Your heir shall be a son) (TP, IV, iii, p. 178).

she is deliberately insulting her husband's manhood.

Beauty as an external cause of love is an idea that greatly appealed to Ford. All his heroines are beautiful, and specified as such, so that we have no doubt of their power to cause the strongest kind of love. The eye as the channel of infection is to Ford as common a reference as it is to his contemporaries. Orgilus speaks of Penthea's eyes

as "the arrows of pure love;"⁸ Velasco tells Salassa "Mine eyes and your commanding beauty/Made me a prisoner;"⁹ and at the same time Ford can satirize the commonplace notion in Guzman's elaborate language:

Her fair eyes,
Like to a pair of pointed beams drawn from
The sun's most glorious orb, do dazzle sight. (LT, III, i, p. 46).

The eyes of Ford's characters are potent to do a considerable amount of damage in a glance; it is sometimes suggested that there can be adultery in an exchange of glances: Bassanes has Penthea's window blocked up because he thinks of the kind of lust that is "committed by the eye;" and D'Avolos, telling Fiormonda of his discovery that Fernando loves Bianca, speaks of "the infinite appetite of lust in the piercing adultery of his eye."¹⁰ Again, though Phebe in As You Like It scorns the idea that her eye can wound, saying that the mark of a rush or the scratch of a pin does more harm than an angry glance, Penthea in all seriousness tells Calantha that by a look or a word she holds complete authority over Ithocles' life.¹¹ Ford was ready enough to mock the extremes of the lover's language; but the basic tenets of the love convention he held seriously.

As for the outward signs of the love disease in the behaviour of the lover, they are too ubiquitous to cite in detail. Fernando betrays his love for Bianca when he blushes at Fiormonda's accusation of it. Giovanni says he has "spent many a silent night in sighs and groans," while Annabella claims, once Giovanni has confessed his incestuous love for her, that for every sigh and tear he has spent for her, she has spent twenty for him; Malfato adopts a "retired privacy" in his unhappy love, Fernando "love [s] to be alone," and Palador's first words in his The

Lover's Melancholy are "Why all this company?"

The well-known power of music to augment desire adds to Bassanes' suspicions when he hears a song about beauty coming from the chamber in which Penthea is talking with her brother:

Sounds of such delicacy are but fawnings
Upon the sloth of luxury, they heighten
Cinders of covert lust up to a flame. (BH, III, ii, p. 259).

The propensity of lovers to fall to rhyming and sonneteering is, as frequently in contemporary drama, made mostly into a joke. The sonnet that occupies Palador instead of the prescribed exercise we are to take seriously as a clue to his real ailment; but on the other hand it is the absurd lovers, caricatures, who are most given to this habit. Mauruccio in Love's Sacrifice, the old man turned suitor, spews forth ill-scanning doggrel and thinks himself a rival to Dante and Petrarch. On the other hand, the difficulty that some lovers find in making themselves articulate is exemplified in Malfato who, in telling his own story, showed how he lost what might have been a wife:

Still on he loved, and loved, and wish'd, and wish'd;
Eftsoon began to speak, yet soon broke off,
And still the fondling durst not, -- cause he durst not.
(LT, IV, i, p. 65).

One would expect Ford to treat of the cures of love in more detail than his contemporaries, since he tends to adopt the medical method. And in fact his plays do illustrate most of the different treatments that Burton and the medical writers advocate. Giovanni, in the grip of his incestuous love, tries fasting among other attempts to control his unruly blood claiming that he has "even starv'd/My veins with daily fasts."¹² Corax prescribes exercise for the melancholy prince of Cyprus, and is

exasperated to find his advice is not followed:

A book! is this the daily exercise
 I did prescribe? instead of following health,
 Which all men covet, you pursue disease.
 Where's your great horse, your hounds, your set at tennis,
 Your balloon ball, the practice of your dancing,
 Your casting of the sledge, or learning how
 To toss a pike? all changed into a sonnet!
 (LM, II, i, p. 31).

The treatment of the change of air, and the separation from the beloved that goes with it, is also exemplified: Menaphon, finding that he cannot win the love of the haughty Thamasta, leaves Cyprus for a year -- only to find when he returns that his love is the same as before. Roseilli, finding he has been banished through Fiormonda, takes comfort in the thought that his absence may make him forget the wrongs he has suffered through her.

Counsel is a cure that is frequently attempted, but seldom successful. "No counsel could divert him" from making an unsuitable marriage, we are told of the duke in Love's Sacrifice. Giovanni says that "what wit or art/Could counsel, I have practised" -- again, without success.¹³

Ford, then, like most other exponents of the love malady, preaches that the only efficacious cure is possession of the beloved. When the methods of physic and the counsel of friends have no effect, removal of the cause of the disease is the only hope.

"O madam," Fernando pleads his adulterous love for Bianca,

still I find
 No physic strong to cure a tortured mind
 But freedom from the torture it sustains. (LS, II, iii, p. 46).

And this doctrine is put forward more with the air of its being a cure

for a disease than merely a happy resolution to a story. Flavia's unhappy position, for instance, begins by her actually being used as a prescription, literally bought by a rich man from her poorer husband. Her second marriage, with Julio, is explained in this way:

'Twas thought
By his physicians, that she was a creature
Agreed best with the cure of the disease
His present new infirmity then labour'd in. (FCN, I, i, p. 229).

If the disease cannot be treated in this way, the results are often disastrous. Ford follows Burton in his prognostics of unsatisfied love — they are madness and death. Though there is plenty of satire on the love convention in his plays, he is serious enough about its consequences in the end. The worldly-wise Rosalind answers Orlando when he threatens to die of love, "Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them; but not for love,"¹⁴ and in Shakespeare's play we are persuaded that hers is, after all, the sensible point of view. Penthea, however, would prove Rosalind wrong — for she fulfils both the prognostics of madness and death in her hopeless love for Orgilus: the song sung at her death has as its theme "Love's martyrs must be ever, ever dying."¹⁵ "Love me, or kill me, brother," and "Love me, or kill me, sister," Annabella and Giovanni command each other, when they first decide to yield to their passion. For Ford's lovers, indeed, these are the only alternatives.

I have tried to show that Ford took the love malady seriously, far more seriously than, say Shakespeare took it. Yet at the same time, of course, he was fully conscious of it as merely a "convention" — a convention that was suitable to be joked about and satirized, but in

which the dramatist should show himself to be sophisticated. So Ford's characters confidently use the vocabulary of the love melancholy convention: Camillo and Vespucci, for instance, the amorous pair of suitors in The Fancies who think they can between them seduce Flavia, twit each other with the symptoms of love which they claim are apparent:

So, Vesupcci!
 This will not do, I read it in thy forehead,
 The grain of thy complexion is quite alter'd;
 Once 'twas a comely brown, 'tis now of late
 A perfect green and yellow; sure prognosticates
 Of th' overflux o' th' gall, and melancholy,
 Symptoms of love and jealousy. (III, ii, p. 269).

In a similar vein, Romanello, in his disguise as a courtly wit, airs his knowledge of the special adjustments of dress that go with the various stages of the love malady: women, he says, far from being more secret than men in the conduct of their love affairs, allow their dresses to blab their vanities:

Carnation for your points? there's a gross babblers;
 Tawney? hey ho! the pretty heart is wounded:
 A knot of willow ribbons? she's forsaken.
 Another rides the cock-horse, green and azure, . . .
 But desperate black put them in mind of fish-days.
 (III, iii, p. 278).

This is a far more detailed account of dress than is afforded by the usual description of the lover, be he point-device or demonstrating a careless desolation in his attire. And yet this is apparently not simply a satirical exaggeration on Romanello's part, for Ford subsequently refers to the same sartorial indications in a serious passage. The Queen, who had expected a joyful reconciliation with Alphonso, hears from his own mouth that he still hates her sex. She calls to her attendant, and tells her to

spread all my robes,
 My jewels and apparel on the floor,
 And for a crown get me a willow wreath:
 No, no, that's not my colour; -- buy me a veil
 Ingrain'd in tawny. Alas, I am forsaken,
 And none can pity me. (II, 1275).

There is a similar blending of the serious with the satirical in Ford's portrayal of the Petrarchan convention of extravagant praise and extravagant comparison. Here Ford seems a little in a quandary, for he obviously wants to convince us that his heroines are very beautiful, and yet his descriptions of them seldom mount above the merely conventional; and at the same time, he wants to show that he knows how ridiculous these conventional comparisons are. So Giovanni, gazing on Annabella, describes how

The lily and the rose, most sweetly strange,
 Upon your dimple cheeks do strive for change; (TP, I, iii, p. 124).

and Alphonso, remembering the beauty of the queen, speaks of her in very similar terms:

I have survey'd the wonder of her cheeks,
 Compar'd them to the lily and the rose,
 And by my life, Muretto, roses are
 Adulterate to her blush, and lillies pale
 Examin'd with her white. (Q, IV, 2407).

When Ford serves us this kind of comparison expecting us to be moved, it is hard to see much humour when he satirizes just this mode of speech in Guzman, who describes his love in these terms:

Her fair eyes,
 Like to a pair of pointed beams drawn from
 The sun's most glorious orb, do dazzle sight,
 Audacious to gaze there; then over those
 A several bow of jet securely twines
 In semicircles; under them two banks
 Of roses red and white, divided by
 An arch of polish'd ivory, surveying
 A temple from whence oracles proceed. (LT, III, i, p. 46).

This kind of hyperbolical and evidently strained comparison is different in extent from those which we are intended to take seriously, but it is not different in kind. The impressive moments in Ford's poetry are for the most part pitched low: his still waters run deep. It is in such a play as Love's Sacrifice, where he attempts to maintain a high pitch of emotion through whole scenes and acts, that he is at his worst. When he aspires to panegyric or to ecstasy, the lilies, and roses, and precious stones come into requisition. There is a passage in The Queen which falls strangely flat: the queen is transported to hear that Alphonso is reconciled to her, and thinks of giving some shape to her joy:

If 'twere possible
To get a chariot cut out of a rock,
Made all of one whole diamond, drawn all on pavements
Of pearl and amber, by four ivory steeds
Of perfect crystal: this were worth presenting. (III, 1912).

We can only agree with her attendants that she is "transported to strange impossibilities." Palador's reception of his long-lost Eroclea,

Come home, home to my heart, thou banish'd peace!

is both simpler and more moving.

Ford frequently parodies the affected language of courtship, both as it is used by court toadies like Pelias, and by lovers of the hypocritical kind. Camillo reports an affected conversation of this kind between Flavia and Vespucci:

Quoth she, the she, "why hang thy looks like bell-ropes
Out of the wheels?" thou, flinging down thy eyes
Low at her feet, repliedst, "because, oh sovereign!
The great bell of my heart is crack'd, and never
Can ring in tune again, till 't be new cast by
One only skilful founderness." (FCN, III, ii, p. 269).

Ford, in fact, learned the uses of the alternative convention of opposing

down-to-earth expression to the airy flights of courtly language. There is a noticeable vein of the kind of satire that makes a joke out of opposing conventional phraseology with common sense. This is the sort of joke we hear in A Winter's Tale when Camillo pays Perdita a courtly compliment;

Camillo. I should leave grazing, were I of your flock,
And only live by gazing.

Perdita. Out, alas!
You'd be so lean that blasts of January
Would blow you through and through; (IV, iv, 109).

or in As You Like It, when Phebe scorns the idea that an eye can do any physical damage. There is the same sort of exchange in the passage in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore where Soranzo is proposing to Annabella:

Soranzo. See you these true love's tears? . . .
They plead to you for grace.

Annabella. Yet nothing speak.

Soranzo. . . . I'm sick, sick to the heart.

Annabella. Help, aqua vitae!

Soranzo. What mean you?

Annabella. Why, I thought you had been sick. (III, ii, p. 156).

But again it is worth noticing that such an exchange, which would be quite in order between, say, Rosalind and Orlando, is only possible in Ford's plays in a relationship that does not require our sympathy. The scene between Annabella and Soranzo is in deliberate contrast to the scene between Annabella and Giovanni, where the sighs and the tears are genuine. This sort of exchange would be unthinkable, too, between Palador and Eroclea, or Castamela and Troylo, even though these are characters in 'comedies.'

Ford made liberal use of the scenic effects and theatrical devices which his stage afforded. In all his plays there is a scene-within-a-scene of some kind. The real act in an apparently feigned entertainment --

the kind of revenge that Hieronimo achieved in The Spanish Tragedy -- was a trick that appealed to Ford as to his contemporaries. It is during a stately dance before the court that Ferentes is stabbed by the three women he has seduced. Hippolita, too, attempts revenge on her former lover, Soranzo, during the course of a dance, and has her poisoned chalice commended to her own lips. More original was Ford's idea of the dancer's carrying on the dance through announcements of tragedy in the world of reality: this is Calantha's achievement in The Broken Heart.

It is interesting to note how many of these interludes take the form of variations, serious and satirical, on the theme of love: of love viewed in the light of contemporary literary and medical traditions. The Masque of Melancholy has a dissertation on Love Melancholy as its climax; the concluding dance in The Fancies, Chaste and Noble is one especially designed to demonstrate the universality of love, just as the Dance of Death demonstrates the universality of death:

to show how love o'ersways
All men of several conditions, Soldier,
Gentry, Fool, Scholar, Merchant-man, and Clown. (V, iii, p. 320).

The distinctive appearance, gesture, and general deportment of a lover lend themselves both to serious representation and parody on the stage. Mauruccio, the old man who has turned courtier and lover, is a focus of attention in Love's Sacrifice in that he is there, drivelling and posturing in the name of love, for the delectation not only of the audience but also of the other characters. He is made a spectacle for the diversion of the court of Pavy while he practises his wooing technique in front of a mirror. This is a scene-within-a-scene in the same sense as Malvolio's unintentional performance before Sir Toby and his

friends.

Cuculus, in The Lover's Melancholy, is a closely related character, being "as rare an old youth as ever walked cross-gartered." Here Ford demonstrates his sophistication in the love convention by presenting the absurd variations of the old man as he rehearses his approach to his three mistresses according to their social position, with his female page standing for each in turn. To the waiting woman Mauruccio is verbose but non-committal; while he decides to approach the gentlewoman with the woebegone aspect of the typical melancholy lover:

I must come to her in whining tune; sigh, wipe mine eyes,
fold my arms, and blubber out my speech. (III, i, p. 49).

In his final sally, for the princess, he blossoms into verse. Eventually, he is found by the other characters on his knees to his own page, so that the scene is set off as a separate interlude for the amusement of them as well as the audience.

Other visual effects in Ford's plays show even the serious lovers with all the conventional gesture and behaviour of the sufferer from love melancholy. Alphonso shows that he is at last infected with love by his behaviour, at the same time demonstrating the total absorption of the lover. Though he has apprehended his wife for supposed adultery, he still becomes helpless in her presence. This is the way he behaves towards his prisoner:

Alphonso. Let me dull my eyes
With surfeit on thy beauty. What art thou,
Great dazzling splendour? Let me ever look
And dwell upon this presence.

Muretto. Now it works.

Alphonso. I am distract. Say? What! Do not, do not --

Muretto. My lord the King! -- Why, sir! --

He is in a trance, or else metamorphosed to some pillar
of marble: how fixedly 'a stands. D'ee hear, sir? . . .

(Q, IV, 2537).

-- and so on. In fact, Ford, like Marston, might just as well have used the stage direction Alphonso falls in love, for this is exactly what his actor has to enact. In Love's Sacrifice, Ford's version of the Othello story, D'Avolos first conceives his villainy when he sees Fernando betray his adulterous love by his behaviour. D'Avolos finds him reading a love letter that he has just written to Bianca:

Alone? reading a letter? good; how now? striking his breast!
 what, in the name of policy, should this mean? tearing his
 hair! passion; by all the hopes of my life, plain passion!
 now I perceive it. If this be not a fit of some violent
 affection, I am an ass in understanding. (II, ii, p. 36).

Then D'Avolos sets out to discover the object of Fernando's passion, and there is some more theatrical juggling, as he shows two portraits which, fortunately for his device, he has with him: one of Fiormonda, who has employed him to procure Fernando's love for her, and one of the duchess. Fernando, on viewing the second picture, goes into something like a trance, speaks fragmentarily in answer to D'Avolos's comments, and his eye becomes "fix'd as if it were incorporated there." Here again, then, a spotlight from within the stage illuminates one particular part of it; and the focus of attention is on the distinctive actions of the lover, qua lover. In this case Fernando's behaviour is a turning point in the action, too, since he gives away the secret of his adulterous love to the enemy most anxious to use it against him.

The picture, as the thing most powerfully evocative of love in the absence of the beloved herself, is a frequent "prop." or reference in Ford's plays. It is given considerable dramatic importance in Love's Sacrifice, and appears again in The Lover's Melancholy. Palador wears a "tablet" around his neck -- a miniature of Erclea which is the only

thing he shows any interest in during the time he is afflicted with melancholy; and Eroclea wears a similar picture of him, which she speaks of as

the only physic
My solitary cares have hourly took,
To keep me from despair. (IV, iii, p. 86).

To an audience familiar with the conventions that surrounded the picture of the beloved, Mauruccio's elaborate device for securing the love of Fiormonda would have been amusing enough: he plans to have a large portrait of himself painted, with his doublet open, disclosing, mounted in blood-red velvet, a mirror in the shape of a heart; so that

she shall no oftener powder her hair, surfell her cheeks, cleanse her teeth, or conform the hairs of her eyebrows, . . . but she shall as often gaze on my picture, remember me, and behold the excellence of her excellency's beauty, in the prospective and mirror, as it were, in my heart. (LS, II, i, p. 31).

The demeanour of the melancholy lover can, of course, be assumed as a pose by philanderers, who may think this a convenient preliminary to seduction. So Futelli takes the same attitude as Ovid in the Ars Amatoria, that of the skilled amatory technician, in a passage that compares love and war:

So in the feats of courtship,
First, choice is made of thoughts, behaviour, words,
The set of looks, the posture of the beard,
Beso las manos, cringes of the knee,
The very hums and ha's, thumps, and ah me's!
(LT, II, i, p. 27).

Ford's variation on this theme is to show how this pose can be adopted, not only for purposes of seduction, but as a disguise for true feeling. This is the recourse of Flavia in The Fancies, Chaste and Noble. She finds herself in the anomalous position of having been virtually sold by one husband to another. And although her inclinations were not consulted

in the matter, the world in general is ready enough to suspect her of being a wanton, and a pair of drones, Camillo and Vespucci, come hovering round in hopes that she may be as changeable as she seems. In this predicament she actually acts the part she is suspected of, and shows all the symptoms of being an irrational, love-hungry woman who dotes to absurdity on her second husband, or the nearest male: counting the minutes of his absence, and apparently almost swooning when he returns; and indulging, in the meantime, in the affected language of courtship with her two attendants.

If Flavia can, as it were, disguise herself as an irrational lover, so many lovers in Ford's plays find it necessary to disguise themselves as other characters. His lovers can apparently 'change shape with Proteus for advantages,' for except for Perkin Warbeck all the plays have this figure of the metamorphosed lover. Roseilli and Romanello, both rejected as suitors, return as, respectively, an idiot and a witty courtier, in order to be near their mistresses and to watch their doings. Richardetto, the cuckold, comes back as a doctor to watch his wife and take revenge on her lover. Benatzi, another discarded husband, succeeds in remarrying his wife in his garb of a disbanded soldier. The disguises of Winnifrede in The Witch of Edmonton and Eroclea involve a change in sex: and there are comic counterparts to them in the men who appear as women, Grilla and Mopas, in order to make fools of some other male character. Orgilus speaks for all of these, when he decides to turn into a poor scholar in order to gain access to Penthea, in concluding, "Love, thou art full of mystery!"¹⁶ Here again, in fact, Ford makes the lover the centre of visual interest, as well as a turning-point in the plot.

In the dialogue of Ford's lovers we find repeatedly that the language of love is very much the language of religion and servitude. Menaphon is overjoyed when Thamasta allows him to style himself her "servant" and Vespucci calls his mistress "sovereign". Velasco avows his love to Salassa in these terms:

You, lady, are the deity I adore,
Have kneel'd to in my heart, have vow'd my soul to,
In such a debt of service, that my life
Is tenant to your pleasure. (Q, II, 1383).

That Ford took the relationship between love and religion seriously — more seriously, it seems, than any of his contemporaries — is shown by the figure of Giovanni, in whom love and religion make up the central conflict of the play. At the last Giovanni can resolve the conflict only by turning his love into his religion; thus confirming the observation made by Burton and other authorities that love is all the heaven that lovers desire:

O the glory
Of two united hearts like hers and mine!
Let poring book-men dream of other worlds;
My world, and all of happiness, is here,
And I'll not change it for the best to come:
A life of pleasure is Elysium. (V, iii, p. 192).

When the mistress holds such ascendancy in the heart and soul of her lover, it is not surprising that she should sometimes abuse her power. Burton discourses at length on the tyranny of love: and Ford devotes the whole of the secondary plot in The Queen, the story of Velasco and Salassa, to this theme. She finds herself in the enviable position of having a great soldier a slave to her least command; and she decides to exercise her power for her own entertainment and prestige. So instead of commanding him to perform some great act of courage, she

tells him that he must act the coward.

'Tis common
 T'observe how love hath made a coward valiant;
 But that a man as daring as Velasco
 Should to express his duty to a mistress
 Kneel to his own disgraces, and turn coward,
 Belongs to me and to my glories only. (II, 1512).

And the rest of the story is concerned with how Velasco keeps his word beyond her intention, how she suffers, repents, and how they are finally reconciled when she has learned the lesson of the proud mistress.

It is commonplace to execrate Ford's attempts at comedy. But it is worth considering whether his comic interludes would not have seemed less maladroit to a contemporary audience than to a modern reader. The fact that his plays are seldom performed means that any amusement we might derive from the appearance and deportment of a Bergetto or a Fulgoso must be lost. But besides this, Ford's jokes about the extremes of conventionality in love are no longer topical; whereas to a seventeenth century audience they would have been novel variations on a familiar and enjoyable theme. A study of Ford's dependence on the Renaissance conception of love does restore the original spark of humour to some of his comic sallies; we may appreciate, for instance, the comic ingenuity of Mauruccio's conceit of the picture that will procure a duchess's love, or the ironic bathos in Guzman's declaration:

He who names my queen of love
 Without his bonnet vail'd, or saying grace,
 As at some paranympal feast, is rude,
 Nor vers'd in literature. (LI, III, i, p. 45).

We still find Touchstone and Audrey funny. But this is because Shakespeare's humour comprehended love, whereas Ford's jokes are limited to love melancholy.

In this chapter I set out to show to what extent Ford depended on the contemporary convention of the love malady: how automatically and accurately he used its terminology; how he exploited it for dramatic effect in both his serious and his comic situations; and how often it decided both the course of his plots and the conduct of individual scenes, incidents, and visual effects. In many respects he was simply covering ground again that had been proved safe by his predecessors and contemporaries; but in extent and conviction he went beyond them. We find him consistently concerned not only to exploit love melancholy, but also to expound it.

FOOTNOTES

¹BH, II, iii, p. 253; and III, vi, p. 278.

²LS, II, i, p. 34.

³Q, I, 592.

⁴LS, I, ii, p. 21.

⁵TP, I, iii, p. 125.

⁶Q, II, 742; and LS, III, i, p. 58.

⁷LS, II, i, p. 35.

⁸BH, II, iii, p. 249.

⁹Q, II, 1376.

¹⁰LS, II, ii, p. 43.

¹¹AYL, III, v, 10; and BH, III, v, p. 278.

¹²TP, I, iii, p. 122.

¹³LS, I, i, p. 12; and TP, I, iii, p. 122.

¹⁴AYL, IV, ii, 14.

¹⁵BH, IV, iii, p. 301.

¹⁶BH, I, iii, p. 229.

CHAPTER IV

THE CULT OF FRUSTRATION

As generally defined in the Renaissance, love is the desire for beauty -- desire being as much a symptom of a physical as of a mental condition. When this desire is denied, what results, by a physiological and psychological process, is love melancholy. In other words, love melancholy is the manifestation of frustration. And it is sexual frustration which is the basis of a variety of emotional situations in the plays of Ford.

In this connection a study of Love's Sacrifice is illuminating. Love's Sacrifice may be a play which we cannot admire, but at least it is worth considering as an expression of Ford's conception of love; for, as Gifford says, whatever we think of it, "the author and his friends appear to have regarded it with complacency."¹ On what this complacency was based we do not know: perhaps on its box-office appeal, for this is the most 'theatrical' of Ford's plays. But we should also consider the possibility that in this play Ford felt he had succeeded in expressing an idea that was central to his conception of love and virtue.

The story of the main action is this: Caraffa, the middle-aged Duke of Pavy, marries the beautiful Bianca against the advice of his counsellors, for she is not of the nobility. Fernando, Caraffa's friend, falls in love with her, and three times avows his passion, meeting on each occasion a cold and reproachful return from her. Finally, however, she comes to his bed in her night attire, saying that she can no longer

conceal her love for him, and that she means

To give my body up to thy embraces,
A pleasure that I never wish'd to thrive in
Before this fatal minute: mark me now;
If thou dost spoil me of this robe of shame,
By my best comforts, here I vow again,
To thee, to heaven, to the world, to time,
Ere yet the morning shall new-christen day,
I'll kill myself. (III, iv, p. 52).

Fernando, on these conditions, does not take her body, but they confirm their love instead with an exchange of vows and a "chaste kiss."

Bianca, having made this gesture, relaxes her control to a certain degree, and, after all her previous self-discipline, now finds concealment more difficult. Ford gives us a scene to show something of the trials of an illicit - and especially an unconsummated -- love affair. The scene is the state-room in the palace, and the court is assembled in the Duke's presence, when the duchess addresses Fernando:

Bianca. Your lip, my lord!

Fernando. Madam.

Bianca. Perhaps your teeth have bled; wipe it with my handkerchief: Give me, I'll do't myself -- Speak, shall I steal a kiss? believe me, my lord, I long. [Aside to Fernando]

Fernando. Not for the world.

Fiormonda. [Aside] Apparent impudence! (III, ii, p. 62).

Now Fiormonda, the duke's sister, wanting revenge because Fernando had rejected her love, makes Caraffa believe through her instrument D'Avolos that his friend and his wife are cuckolding him. To try them he purportedly leaves on an expedition to the Lucca springs, and returns stealthily to see what use they have made of his absence. He finds them kissing, and Bianca in her night attire. Fernando is dragged away, while the Duke prepares to kill Bianca. Far from trying to extenuate herself, she provokes him by calling Fernando "much the properer man," and telling him that his own person has little that can satisfy a woman:

Can you imagine, sir, the name of duke
 Could make a crooked leg, a scrambling foot,
 A tolerable face, a wearish hand,
 A bloodless lip, or such an untrimm'd beard
 As yours, fit for a lady's pleasure? no. (V, i, p. 92).

She asserts, in order to expedite her own execution and save her lover, that it was he who had held back. Caraffa, provoked by her and by his sister, kills her; and then proceeds straight to the execution of Fernando. But Fernando succeeds in convincing him that Bianca was a "spotless wife." Then, at Bianca's tomb, Fernando appears in his winding sheet as the Duke is performing the obsequies, and drinks poison; and Caraffa, having given instructions that he, his wife, and his "unequall'd friend" should be lodged all in one tomb, stabs himself.

The story, in fact, looks like an elaborate attempt on Ford's part to have his cake and eat it: to combine the sexual tantalizing of The White Devil, where adultery is all but committed on the stage, with the tragic realization of an Othello that he has killed an innocent wife. The story recalls Othello's exchange with Iago:

Iago. To kiss in private?

Othello. An unauthoriz'd kiss.

Iago. Or to be naked with her friend in bed

An hour or more, not meaning any harm?

Othello. Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm?

It is hypocrisy against the devil. (IV, i, 2).

It almost looks as though Ford wrote this play as a refutation of Othello's tenet. It is interesting to see how he indulges in some acrobatics to ensure that the detractors appear villainous even though what they assert may be true: for instance, the exchange between Bianca and Fernando on which D'Avolos bases all his suspicions of the duchess is one where she acts with perfect propriety, though Fernando is on his

knees to her. D'Avolos is not present at the next scene, where Bianca appears at Fernando's bedside.

However we may condemn the ethic of this play, we may at least pay Ford the respect of presuming he meant what he said: and what he said was not that Bianca, if she was not an adulteress, might just as well have been; it was that she was a "most innocent lady." It is not only Fernando who praises her, but others vouch for him when he does so:

O duke!
 Could'st thou rear up another world like this
 Another like to that, and more, or ~~more~~,
 Herein thou art most wretched; all the wealth
 Of all those worlds could not redeem the loss
 Of such a spotless wife. Glorious Bianca,
 Reign in the triumph of thy martyrdom,
 Earth was unworthy of thee. (V, ii, p. 99).

In fact the embargo that Bianca places on intercourse, which she does not place on kissing or the illicit converse in bedrooms, is not a mere technicality. Ford makes sure that Caraffa's accusations are false ones, based on adultery and not mere betrayal of affection; he bids her weep for her "veined follies,"

For one above the rest, adultery!
 Adultery, Bianca! such a guilt,
 As, were the sluices of thine eyes let up,
 Tears cannot wash it off: 'tis not the tide
 Of trivial wantonness from youth to youth,
 But the abusing of thy lawful bed,
 Thy husband's bed . . .
 Thy bastarding the issues of a prince. (V, i, p. 94).

Bianca is actually innocent of this sin, and this fact is all-important if we are to take at all seriously Caraffa's grief when he discovers the truth. She is not a whore like Annabella, who consummates her love, but a saint who controls it, and a martyr who dies innocently. The inference is that she is the more virtuous for loving Fernando -- so long as she did not indulge her love -- rather than the less so. Her trial has been the greater, and so then is the glory. This may be called an exaltation of

continence over temperance. But more plainly, it seems to be an exaltation of frustration.

To return, then, to the opening statement of this chapter: Love's Sacrifice is an explicit pronouncement on a theme that emerges as central in Ford's drama: the theme of frustration. On examination we find that nearly all of his plays can be read as a series of variations on this theme. Situations to which he returns with the insistence of obsession have as their basis the physical denial of love. It is worth examining some of these recurrent situations and the treatment they receive.

The most obvious of these is a variation on the eternal triangle. Ford's characteristic version of this is one in which the woman has contracted a union of love with one man, which is then broken by her being for some reason matched with another, while her first love, which still endures, must now be unsatisfied. Bianca's story differs slightly in the sequence of events, but it is comparable in that, being contracted to one man, she finds herself in love with another.

In The Lover's Melancholy Ford was already experimenting with such a situation: Eroclea was contracted to Palador, and their fathers had agreed on the match, before Palador's father wooed her himself as "a prey to some less noble design,"⁸ and Eroclea had to escape. Thereafter she and Palador had to spend "a long, long time" apart, and without any certainty of a reunion.

In Eroclea's case it is the tyranny of Agenor which intervenes between her and happiness with Palador, rather than another marriage. But the broken contract is an integral part of the story; for the fact that vows of love have been exchanged by the lovers adds to the poignancy

of the frustrated lover's condition: he is not simply a melancholy lover pining for the love of a disdainful mistress; he has the added bitterness of contemplating what might have been.

Penthea is the most detailed study in this situation. She too was contracted to Orgilus in a union of love that was approved by both parents:

A freedom of converse, an interchange
Of holy and chaste love, so fix'd our souls
In a firm growth of union, that no time
Can eat into the pledge. (BH, I, i, p. 218).

This was what was legally known as spousals de praesenti,² and almost constituted marriage. Olivia called Cesario "husband" after such a pre-contract. In fact the violence of Ithocles' action was considerable in breaking this contract in order to marry Penthea, for ambitious reasons, to the old nobleman Bassanes. Penthea thus combines, as Peter Ure has pointed out, the figure of the woman bereft of her lover, and of the adulterous wife. Ford presents in her a strange combination of injured innocence and conscience-stricken guilt. On the one hand she is all piety and endurance. It was "cruelty" that "enforced/Divorce betwixt my body and my heart;" and there was "a rape done on my truth."³ She speaks of her fame, one of the three jewels which she has to bequeath, as untouched by scandal. In all of this we can concur: there is nothing to suggest that Penthea's marriage with Bassanes was wanton, or anything but enforced. Yet at the same time she suffers from a strange sexual guilt. She tells Ithocles that she is

Such an one
As only you have made me; a faith-breaker,
A spotted whore; -- forgive me, I am one --
In act, not in desires, the gods must witness. (III, ii, p. 261).

The gods do witness it, and nobody blames Penthea except herself: and she herself decides on a punishment which she considers appropriate for her "pleurisy:"

To all memory
 Penthea's, poor Penthea's name is strumpeted:
 But since her blood was season'd by the forfeit
 Of noble shame, with mixtures of pollution,
 Her blood -- 'tis just -- be henceforth never heighten'd
 With taste of sustenance! starve; let that fulness
 Whose pleurisy hath fever'd faith and modesty --
 Forgive me; Oh! I faint. (IV, ii, p. 293.)

Ford has given a symbolic significance to the manner of Penthea's death which is different from the personal significance she herself assigns to it. At the first meeting in the play of Penthea and Orgilus, when he is still disguised as a scholar, he makes a speech that deeply disturbs her. It is after Bassanes has been trying to cure her "melancholy" with offers of a change of air, rich attire, visits to the court and so on. Orgilus speaks unknown and so like an oracle:

All pleasures are but mere imagination,
 Feeding the hungry appetite with steam,
 And sight of banquet, whilst the body pines,
 Not relishing the real taste of food:
 Such is the leanness of a heart, divided
 From intercourse of troth-contracted loves. (II, iii, p. 256).

It is no great feat of interpretation to take starvation as the equivalent of sexual frustration. There is a parallel symbolism in the death of Orgilus, who is bled to death. In his case too the death is partly a punishment -- and it is chosen by himself -- for the havoc that his love, or "pleurisy," has wreaked; but partly, too, it represents the process he has undergone in his lifetime, the denial of his sexual desire. Penthea not only literally starves herself, but to some extent the starvation of her love is deliberate, too. When Orgilus, grown desperate in his situa-

tion, comes to remind her that she is still his rightful wife, she dismisses him not only for the present, but entirely:

The virgin-dowry which my birth bestow'd
Is ravish'd by another; my true love
Abhors to think, that Orgilus deserv'd
No better favours than a second bed; (II, iii, p. 252)

and she goes on to say that she would marry another husband even worse than Bassanes, rather than debase her lasting love for Orgilus by marrying him now. We cannot but feel, with Orgilus, that she grows 'wanton in his sufferance.'

Yet there is little doubt that Ford intended Penthea's demeanour in her affliction to be taken as entirely admirable. She will not contemplate sexual relations with the man she loves, even when the obstacle to their love is removed, if those relations are to be tainted in any way. Her attitude presents an idealism in love that amounts to the same exaltation of frustration as we find in Bianca.

In the same play we have the story of Calantha. She is a difficult character to comment upon, for she exhibits Ford's ideal virtues of fortitude and self-control to such an extent that she is almost a-human, a figure out of allegory rather than life. But her allegory is a version of the same story as Penthea's, the story of the broken marriage contract. Calantha is betrothed to a man she loves, Ithocles; but, as the consummation of Penthea's love for Orgilus is prevented, so is the consummation of Calantha's, in her case by the death of her lover. She nevertheless marries the corpse of Ithocles by placing a ring on its finger, and afterwards dies herself, thus fulfilling the central prophesy of the play, "the lifeless trunk shall wed the broken heart." That is,

in being deprived of her living love, she marries death, just as Penthea, in a less literal sense, married death by marrying Bassanes.

Ford again makes a study in this special form of the eternal triangle in the person of Flavia. She, like Penthea, is matched, without being consulted, with a man she does not love, after being happily united with one she does. She was married to Fabricio, a merchant, and while his money lasted, so did the joys of their marriage. When he goes bankrupt, he believes she will not wish to remain with him, and so he virtually sells her, having gone through a form of divorce, to Julio, who was apparently sick for love of her. Where Penthea's resentment for her plight is directed all against Ithocles, her brother, Flavia's situation is complicated by the fact that it was her first love who caused her situation.

Ford is not primarily interested in action or denouement: many of his stories, like Flavia's, are half finished before he shows us his characters. He is not interested in showing how Melæander's daughter was wooed and won, or how she came to be banished; or in the course of the feud between Crotolon and Thrasus and how it was to be reconciled by a marriage of the son and daughter of each family. All this information is merely given us in the dialogue, as being necessary for a full understanding of a situation. Nor is much interest concentrated on the event: (though 'Tis Pity She's a Whore is exceptional in this, for here we have all that matters of the story in the play, and our interest certainly is centred in what happens). What Ford can and does portray with power and concentration is the emotional reaction of his characters to the situations in which they find themselves. Ford's ability lies in the presentation

rather of static scenes than of processes.⁴ Each play is memorable more as a series of agonized tableaux than as a sequence of events.

This is so in the presentation of Flavia. We hear the story of her sale to Julio in the first scene of the play simply as an illustration of the general practice of pandarism. Even the resolution of her part in the plot, the casting off of her "antic carriage" and the conversion of Camillo and Vespucci from their former levity, does not excite our interest as does the scene in which she shows her emotional reaction to her peculiar situation; in which wounded affection, reproach and moral indignation are finely mixed. Being now a great lady, she is visited by Fabricio with a suit for money. He takes the attitude that he is to be pitied rather than blamed for his action; but she tells him "thou art unworthy of the name of man."

Those holy vows, which we, by bonds of faith,
Recorded in the register of truth,
Were kept by me unbroken; no assaults
Of gifts, of courtship, from the great and wanton,
No threats, nor sense of poverty, to which
Thy riots had betray'd me, could betray
My warrantable thought to impure folly.
Why would'st thou force me miserable?

Fabricio. The scorn
Of rumour is reward enough, to brand
My lewder actions; 'twas, I thought, impossible
A beauty fresh as was your youth, could brook
The last of my decays.

Flavia. Did I complain?
My sleeps between thine arms were ev'n as sound,
My dreams as harmless, my contents as free,
As when the best of plenty crown'd our bride-bed.
Amongst some of a mean, but quiet, fortune,
Distrust of what they call their own, or jealousy
Of those who in their bosoms they possess
Without control, begets a self-unworthiness;
For which, through fear, or, what is worse, desire
Of paltry gain, they practise art, and labour
To pandar their own wives; those wives, whose innocence,
Stranger to language, spoke obedience only;
And such a wife was Flavia to Fabricio.

Fabricio. My loss is irrecoverable.

Flavia. Call not

Thy wickedness thy loss; without my knowledge
Thou sold'st me, and in open court protested'st
A pre-contract unto another, falsely,
To justify a separation. Wherein
Could I offend, to be believed thy strumpet,
In best sense an adulteress? (FCN, II, i, p. 251).

The parallel with Penthea's situation is obvious. And again this subject of sexual deprivation proves to be one which Ford can portray with considerable perception. Flavia's predicament is not so extreme as Penthea's: Fabricio has shown himself to some extent unworthy of her, and her new husband, Julio, is no Bassanes. Similarly her reaction to the man who caused her predicament is gentler: Flavia's attitude is one of reproach, more explicit but less bitter than the resentment we find Penthea feels against Ithocles: for, as Gifford noted, "this lovely and interesting woman has a spice of selfishness in her grief; and approaches somewhat too nearly to Orgilus in the unforgiving part of his character."⁵ Flavia's fate is not to starve to death; and yet at the end of her story, when Fabricio has gone into a religious house, it is still unthinkable that she should even try to alter her affections and come to love Julio. Fabricio must remain her "only loved lord," and her second marriage mere legalised adultery.

There is no possibility of a happy second love in Ford's plays: love and fate strike together, and only once. The figure of Calantha is symbolic of this truth; Penthea and Flavia are examples of it, and so is Levidolce, the wayward divorcee in Ford's last play.

Levidolce is the heroine of the secondary plot in The Lady's Trial. She is not accorded the attention that Ford spends on Penthea and Flavia,

for she herself is to blame for her condition. She is no suffering innocent, but even characterised as "a wanton" in the Dramatis Personae. However, she is a wanton who reforms. Her history is convincing enough. She was brought up, not by her parents, but by her great-uncle; when she was still young she made a socially ill-judged match with a trencher-waiter, and subsequently repented. She then divorced him in order to become the mistress of the lord Adurni. By the time the play begins, Adurni has tired of her, and her advances are likewise rejected by Mal-fato. She now finds herself a lonely woman whose charms can no longer mend her honesty, supported by an elderly relative whose normal attitude to her is one of moral outrage. Her reaction to her situation is alternately to brazen it out, and to weep and wish she were dead; and finally to plot revenge on the men who have rejected her. Here again Ford shows more skill in depicting her situation than in the management of the action that arises from it. The business of Benatzi's disguise, the remarriage, and the plotted revenge is clumsily handled. What emerges, however, is the one successful resolution of the story of the woman deprived of her partner:

And herein every hope is brought to life,
Which long hath lain in deadness: I have once more
Wedded Benatzi, my divorced husband.
. . . Oh! sweet uncle,
Rejoice with me; I am a faithful convert,
And will redeem the stains of a foul name
By love and true obedience. (LT, V, i, p. 85).

Once again, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore stands out as an exception, and as evidence that Ford's approach was more that of the psychologist, exploring a situation from all angles, than that of the commercial dramatist who re-used a successful idea. Annabella's situation, in love with

Giovanni and necessarily married to Soranzo, is to this extent like Penthea's and Flavia's. But she continues her relations with Giovanni; and by the contrast we have a better standard for judgement of her conduct than we have in the single play. 'Tis Pity She's a Whore is not the subtle and outrageous attack on the mores of society that some critics have claimed it to be.⁶ The judgement -- so far as there is judgement in this partly fatalist play -- is not on the society that condemns incestuous passion, but on the lovers who yield to it. The character of Giovanni is a study in sin, but it is not a vindication of it. This is Giovanni's speech just before disaster overtakes him and his sister, when she has been married to Soranzo as a cover for her pregnancy by him:

Busy opinion is an idle fool,
That, as a school-rod keeps a child in awe,
Frights th' unexperienced tempter of the mind:
So did it me; who, ere my precious sister
Was married, thought all taste of love would die
In such a contract; but I find no change
Of pleasure in this formal law of sports.
She is still one to me, and every kiss
As sweet and as delicious as the first
I reap'd, when yet the privilege of youth
Entitled her a virgin. (V, iii, p. 191).

In view of what follows, (and there is no escaping the fact that their love ends in death, inflicted by one upon the other), it would be as absurd to take this play as a defence of incest and adultery as it would be to take Macbeth as a defence of regicide. To study and to explain abnormal conduct is not necessarily to excuse it.

Another situation based on sexual frustration which recurs in Ford's plays is that of the unconsummated marriage. Considering the relative unusualness of this story line in drama, the number of times Ford treats

it in his few extant plays is astonishing.

In reading the plays we constantly come across such phrases as these: "widowed virginity;" "buried in a bride-bed;" "virgin wives;" "married maids;" "married batchelors;" "divorce betwixt my body and my heart;" "I'll dress my bride-bed in my soul;" "I liv'd widow'd from her bed;" "a ravish'd wife/Widow'd by lawless marriage."⁷ And this is not just verbal play; it is not only the oxymoron that fascinates Ford, but all that can be wrong and unsatisfying in a union that is meant to be physical as well as social.

A key-note is set in the first few lines of the Witch of Edmonton.⁸ Winnifrede, immediately after her marriage with Frank Thorney, finds he must leave her:

Yet methinks
'Tis an hard case, being lawful man and wife,
We should not live together.

And in the rest of his dramatic career Ford continued to explore this theme.

A large proportion of the phrases just quoted come from The Broken Heart. Again Penthea emerges as typifying frustrated womanhood, for not only is her love for her chosen lover denied, but, if we accept the hints of Bassanes' sterility as the truth, her legal marriage is physically incomplete.⁹ This is the situation that underlies her demented speech before she starves herself:

Since I was first a wife, I might have been
Mother to many pretty prattling babes;
They would have smiled when I smiled; and for certain,
I should have cried when they cried: -- truly, brother,
My father would have pick'd me out a husband,
And then my little ones had been no bastards;
But 'tis too late for me to marry now,
I am past child-bearing; 'tis not my fault. (IV, ii, p. 290).

Bassanes' sterility would add considerably to her sense of sexual guilt and the belief that her body has been prostituted; Burton quotes St. Augustine in this context: "Matrimony without hope of children is not a wedding but a jumbling or coupling together."¹⁰ She reflects this view in bequeathing her Youth

To virgin-wives, such as abuse not wedlock
By freedom of desires; but covet chiefly
The pledges of chaste beds for ties of love,
Rather than ranging of their blood: and next
To married maids, such as prefer the number
Of honourable issue in their virtues
Before the flattery of delights by marriage;
May these be ever young! (III, v, p. 277).

To such a mind as Penthea's, her marriage with the sterile Bassanes, even had it not been for her pre-contract with Orgilus, would have been legalized fornication.

Ford touches on the theme of the unconsummated marriage at the end of Love's Sacrifice, in the fate of Fiormonda. Her overweening love for Fernando caused her, when rejected, to incite Caraffa to jealousy and murder. After the calamity, she repents of her actions, and takes Roseilli, her old lover, as consort. He thereupon metes out justice in the state of Pavy:

Thus, then, for you: henceforth I here dismiss
The mutual comforts of our marriage bed:
Learn to new-live, my vows unmov'd shall stand;
And since your life hath been so much uneven
Bethink, in time, to make your peace with heaven.
Fiormonda. Oh me! is this your love?
Roseilli. 'Tis your desert;
Which no persuasion shall remove.
Abbot. 'Tis fit;
Purge frailty with repentance.
Fiormonda. I embrace it.
Happy too late, since lust hath made me foul,
Henceforth I'll dress my bride-bed in my soul. (V, III, p. 107).

Here Ford has shown us a punishment that neatly fits the crime, but he has made no detailed psychological study. However, the situation is worth noting, for though it appears only at the end of Love's Sacrifice, it is duplicated almost exactly at the beginning of The Queen, where it is the basis of the action. Again a subject is raised to the place of consort by a female ruler, and again he takes authority into his own hands and banishes her from the marriage bed. (The repetition of this characteristically Fordian situation is one piece of internal evidence for Ford's authorship of The Queen.)

When Alphonso first proposes his determination to maintain separate households for the first week of marriage, Ford conveys the queen's emotion only by suggestion, by one of the short understatement in which his women can convey so much:

Alphonso. I will make a suit,
And earnest suit t'ye.

Queen. It must then be granted.

Alphonso. That to redeem a while some serious thoughts
Which have misdeem'd your sex, you'll be content
I be a married batchelor one s'ennight.
You cannot but conceive.

Collumello. How's this?

Petruchi. Fine work.

Queen. Alas, my lord, this needs no public mention. (I, 670).

Later in the play, however, when the week has been prolonged to a month, and Alphonso still shows no sign of relenting, we are given a more explicit picture of her suffering. This play is not as powerful as The Broken Heart, and we do not have the same sense of physical deprivation which Penthea embodies. But Ford has invested the Queen's situation with a gentler pathos:

Wherin, my gracious lord, have I offended?
Wherein have I transgress'd against thy laws,

O sacred marriage? To be sequestered
 In the first spring and April of my joys
 From you, much dearer to me than my life?
 By all the honour of a spotless bed,
 Show me my fault, and I will turn away,
 And be my own swift executioner. (II, 1131).

And when Alphonso upbraids her with having married him against his
 will she humbly defends herself:

By the love
 I bear the King of Arragon (an oath
 As great as I can swear by) I conceiv'd
 Your words to be true speakers of your heart,
 And I am sure they were; you swore they were.
 How could I but believe, that lov'd so dearly?

This is the attitude, of wounded affection and suffering patience within
 her enforced state of married virginity, for which we remember the Queen.
 It is also this situation that inspires Ford's best poetry and deepest
 sympathy in the play.

The question of what may happen when a wife, however virtuous, is
 at any time denied the marriage bed underlies the main plot of Ford's
 last play, too. Auria, certainly, is represented as a good and virtuous
 husband, and it is financial necessity that drives him to leave Spinella
 rather than any such motive as Alphonso's. But from the first scene
 Ford establishes that a woman whose husband leaves her has a greater
 trial to endure than just the loss of his companionship. It is in the
 opening conversation between two fashionable philanderers, that we hear
 of Auria and his intention to go to the wars, leaving his newly-married
 wife "to buffet/Land-pirates here at home;" so that we know from the first
 that Spinella's virtue is to be assailed, if not conquered. Then, when
 Auria has taken leave of Spinella, his friend Aurelio suggests that he
 is demanding too much of her in leaving her to a "trial of extremes."

Auria. She's my wife.

Aurelio. And being so, it is not manly done
To leave her to the trial of her wits,
Her modesty, her innocence, her vows:
This is the way that points her out an art
Of wanton life.

Auria. Sir, said ye?

Aurelio. You form reasons,
Just ones, for your abandoning the storms
Which threaten your own ruin; but propose
No shelter for her honour. (I, i, p. 17).

It turns out that Spinella, though for a while she falls under suspicion, is proof to the attacks of the "land-pirates." Nevertheless, the Trial of the title refers not only to the almost legal procedure by which Auria summons witnesses and finally pronounces her innocent, but to her endurance in a test something like the Queen's, the suspension of her marriage rights. At the lowest ebb in her fortitude, she exclaims,

I have assumed a courage
Above my force, and can hold out no longer:
Auria, unkind, unkind! (V, ii, p. 92).

Auria, in fact, by no means escapes our censure for the trial he has inflicted on his wife; and at this point Spinella becomes typical of Ford's women, who are so often called upon to assume a courage above their force.

Ford's characteristic attitude to a situation which he treated so often becomes clearer if it is contrasted with contemporary treatments of the same story line. In Marston's The Insatiate Countess the satirical subplot is concerned with a pair of enemies who both marry on the same day, and immediately become so eager to cuckold each other that they have neither time nor energy to consummate their own marriages. In this situation the wives get together and plot a double bed-trick; after which the husbands are both called out, and, to their mutual consternation, see each

other in night-shirts on each other's doorsteps. In fact, the whole situation is treated as farce, sex and its vagaries being the oldest and surest of jokes. Clearly the story line is the only possible ground of comparison here; Ford's attitude and the extent of his involvement in the similar situations which he creates are entirely different.

Helena, in All's Well That Ends Well, is much more comparable with the Queen, particularly in the initial stages of her grief at finding Bertram never intends to return to her. Her distress in being the cause of driving him to expose himself to danger in the foreign wars shows an attitude like the Queen's in her resolution not to allow her subjects to defend her honour against Alphonso. But their roles in the action are quite different: Helena sets out to remedy her situation, and the emphasis is on her enterprise and ingenuity in accomplishing the bed-trick and fulfilling the complicated conditions that Bertram has demanded for the marriage. The Queen, on the other hand, is entirely passive, and her strength is all in her endurance within her situation: she is presented in a series of scenes that show her submitting herself entirely to Alphonso's will. It is by her passivity and endurance that she finally wins her husband's admiration and love.

Such comparisons suggest that it is not merely accident that there is no bed-trick in Ford's plays; but that he took sex too seriously to allow for such an apparently easy way out.

Burton, among all his wealth of illustrations, has a story that shows his attitude to such a situation quite clearly.

Such a tale hath Heinsius of an impotent and slack scholar, a mere student, and a friend of his, that, seeing by chance a fine damsel sing and dance, would needs marry her; the match was

soon made, for he was young and rich, of good family, smooth of body, skilled in many arts, like that Apollo in Apuleius. The first night, having liberally taken of his liquor (as in that country they do) my fine scholar was so fusled that he no sooner was laid in bed, but he fell fast asleep, never waked till morning, and then much abashed, when the fair morn with purple hue 'gan shine, he made an excuse, I know not what, out of Hippocrates of Cos, &c., and for that time it went current; but when as afterward he did not play the man as he should do, she fell in league with a good fellow, and whilst he sat up late at his study about those Criticisms, mending some hard places in Festus or Pollus, came cold to bed, and would tell her still what he had done, she did not much regard what he said, &c. She would have another matter mended much rather, which he did not perceive was corrupt: thus he continued at his study late, she at her play elsewhere, hating all scholars for his sake, till at length he began to suspect, and turned a little yellow, as well he might; for it was his own fault.

(III, p. 309).

The difference in attitude between Ford and Burton becomes obvious if we try to imagine what kind of play Ford would have written had he attempted to dramatise -- as he very well might have -- this situation. The husband would have been inflicted with "the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation," rather in the manner that Ithocles is inflicted with ambition; and all the mental and physical anguish of the wife before she turned to adultery would have been explored. The judgement "it was his own fault," would probably have been the same, but in Ford's play it would have been somehow irrelevant.

Had Ford asked Burton, 'What about sexual frustration?' Burton would have answered that of course sexual frustration exists, and of course the behaviour of this wife, in suffering from it, was quite predictable and quite defensible. And he would perhaps have wondered at Ford's deep concern. After all, he himself, in writing the Anatomy, admitted that "one must needs scratch where it itches,"¹¹ an admission that no major character in Ford's plays would make. But Burton was studying human

behaviour in the aggregate, and the agony of the individual, which is the province of the dramatist, is beyond his scope. Despite the outburst of contemptus mundi with which he begins the Anatomy, curiosity predominates over outraged morality, and his attitude to human nature is characterised by an almost universal tolerance. He does not show Ford's obsessive concentration on the area in which morality comes into conflict with physical needs.

In The Fancies, Chaste and Noble Ford explores, by suggestion rather than statement, all kinds of sexual deprivation that can result from impotence. This is an unusual subject in contemporary drama, but it seems to have been one that, as we would expect, much interested Ford. Octavio, the marquis of Sienna, and keeper of the mysterious Bower of Fancies, is thus described by his nephew, Troylo:

Our great uncle-marquis,
Disabled from his cradle, by an impotence
In nature first, that impotence since seconded
And render'd more infirm, by a fatal breach
Received in fight against the Turkish gallies,
Is made incapable of any faculty
Of active manhood. (II, ii, p. 254).

It is Livio who jumps to the conclusion that Octavio therefore maintains the Bower to indulge in some perverted sexual practices:

'Tis, 'tis so -- pish, I know it --
Yet he has a kind heart of his own to girls,
Young, handsome girls; yes, yes, so he may;
'Tis granted: -- he would now and then be piddling,
And play the wanton, like a fly that dallies
About a candle's flame; then scorch his wings,
Drop down, and creep away.

And though Troylo corrects this exaggerated impression, it is this which remains in our consciousness as the play proceeds, particularly since it is reinforced by the gross language and behaviour of the supposed eunuch,

Spadone. In his case the references to the frustration that results from castration are explicit: "And still the urchin would, but could not do," Nitido sings to him; and he also has to put up with such taunts as these:

What a terrible sight to a libb'd breech is a sow-gelder! . . .
Go, put on a clean bib, and spin among the nuns, sing 'em
a bawdy song: all the children thou gett'st, shall be
christened in wassel-bowls, and turned into a college of
men-midwives. (I, ii, p. 236).

Spadone himself, who is as foul-mouthed as any of the other low characters in the play, suggests too that the Fancies, maintained as a harem by an impotent old man, turn to lesbianism to alleviate their condition.¹² Livio himself, when Castamela refuses to leave the Bower, believes that she has been infected there with the "whorish itch," and that she has become "mad to prostitute/The glory of thy virgin-dower."¹³ The whole play is built around an atmosphere of impotent sexual hunger that is not entirely dispersed at the resolution.

Ford seriously studies the psychological effects of sexual inadequacy in a man, then, in the characters of Bassanes and Octavio, and hints at it in Caraffa and, possibly, Alphonso, whose exaggerated hatred of women can be interpreted as being at least partly the result of sexual fear. But he makes it the subject of coarse laughter, too, among his low characters. Not only Spadone, but the old lovers, Cuculus and Mauruccio, and even the boy, Nitido, are sneered at for having desires beyond their capabilities.

Besides these themes of the broken love contract, the unconsummated marriage, and impotence, there are other themes based on the denial of love to which Ford frequently returns. The most noticeable of these is

the situation where the normal course of love is prevented by too close a blood relationship between the lovers. This is sufficiently obvious in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, where it forms the basis of the whole plot. But Ford returns to suggestions of some forbidden relationship between brother and sister in The Broken Heart, in which Orgilus is unnaturally jealous of his sister's affections, and Bassanes actually suspects incest between Ithocles and Penthea. Livio's attitude to Castamela, in The Fancies, Chaste and Noble, has sexual overtones; first he acts as a kind of procurer for her; then, when he believes her corrupted, he reacts like a cuckold who has caught his wife in adultery. In The Lady's Trial Ford returns to the idea of a love that is prevented by blood relationship, for Malfato, being Spinella's cousin, is too scrupulous to tell her of his love.

Among the women who suffer from a denial of sexual satisfaction, Ford glances at one class recognized as notoriously wanton since the time of Criseyde, the widow. Fiormonda is the chief example; but Salassa, another widow, is characterised by Lodovico as "one that hath been so often drunk with satiety of pleasure, that fourteen husbands are but as half a draught to quench her thirst in an afternoon." (Q, II, 887).

A theme that is common as the motivation for action in Ford's plays, particularly in the sub-plots, is that of the woman who, when her love is rejected, turns to revenge. Men who are rejected by their mistresses -- Mehaphon and Roseilli, for instance, -- take their rebuffs in all humility. But a woman whose desire is such that she goes to the length of offering herself to a man is driven to a corresponding extreme of resentment if her desire is not satisfied. Marston's type of the

lustful woman, Isabella, finds when she is rejected that "revenge to me is sweeter now than lust."¹⁴ We find this sentiment repeatedly among Ford's lustful women. Hippolita plots an elaborate revenge on Soranzo when he casts her off in favour of Annabella. The three women whom Ferentes seduced turn on him when he collectively insults their sexual vanity. Kala turns against Parthenophil; Levidolce, finding that "affection turn'd to hatred threatens mischief,"¹⁵ bribes Benatzi to murder Adurni and Malfato. Fiormonda's determination, when Fernando rejects her love, to "triumph o'er their graves/Who scorn the low-bent thralldom of my heart,"¹⁶ is the cause of the catastrophe in Love's Sacrifice.

From the foregoing examination of Ford's recurrent themes and situations it emerges that frustration is ubiquitous in his plays, often dominating language, emotion and plot. His central situations are, typically, based on some kind of a denial of love. The forcibly broken betrothal is central to The Lover's Melancholy and The Broken Heart, and to the subplots of The Lady's Trial and The Fancies; and Penthea's predicament also repeats the situation in Love's Sacrifice, of the woman who is indissolubly married to a husband who cannot satisfy her, while longing for union with a lover who could. The predicament of the virgin bride is the focal point of sympathy in The Queen, and the same situation is glanced at ~~the~~ ⁱⁿ The Broken Heart and at the end of Love's Sacrifice; and the effect of the denial of the marriage rights to the wife is again a major theme in The Witch of Edmonton and The Lady's Trial. Impotence or sexual inadequacy are major themes in The Fancies, The Broken Heart and The Queen.

A close analysis of Ford's studies in sexual deprivation shows that the recurrent relationship is typically based on a "pleurisy" in the woman and a deficiency in the man; so that the recognized order of affairs, by which the woman is the passive object of the man's desire, is reversed. It is this reversal which explains Penthea's haunting sense of sexual guilt, and which is the justification for Bianca's partial aberration from her loyalty to her husband. There are no "cold" women in Ford's plays. Bianca's resistance to Fernando's wooing does not last long; Thamasta does not prolong her disdain after she has seen Parthenophil, and Salassa soon repents of her treatment of Velasco. Age does not wither the sexual vitality of Ford's women, either: the old women, Morosa, Morona, Shaparoona, Grausis and the nurse in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, are bawdier than the young.

On the other hand, many of his men, as I have shown, are sexually inadequate; even the sexually omnivorous Ferentes has to labour at the satisfaction of Morona, and finds at last that his capabilities cannot match his opportunities. The aged male lover is a favourite comic theme; but Cuculus and Mauruccio are ridiculous not so much because they claim to be lovers as because the extent of their love is the mere rehearsal of wooing, the adoration of their own reflections in a mirror.

The expression of this kind of frustration in Ford's plays varies from the sublime to the gross: from the exalted agony of a Penthea to the earthiness of a Kala, who laments, "My maidenhead will shortly be so stale/That 'twill be mouldy;"¹⁷ from the dignified endurance of an Octavio to the impotent posturing of a Mauruccio, whose boast of virility is countered with the comment, "a radish root is a spear of steel in

comparison of I know what."¹⁸

It is frustration, too, that determines the dominant mood in Ford's plays, the mood of endurance rather than resistance, passion rather than action. Ford expends his energy not so much in building up a potentially sensational situation as in studying the characters' reactions within it. His skill in the depiction of frustrated love relationships is linked with this particular dramatic strength: the presentation of emotion within a static situation. Frustration is essentially passive, a painful but inactive state. And no dramatist is more capable of conveying the feelings of his characters as 'passion,' in the original sense of 'suffering.' Penthea's function in The Broken Heart is more the expression of passion than the perpetration of action. She is also a woman whose first love was denied and whose husband is unable to satisfy her physical needs. She emerges as not only the most memorable but the most typical of Ford's heroines. It is hardly necessary to stress the connection between frustration and love melancholy with her before us; she is the perfect exemplum of Burton's remark that "to love, and not enjoy, [is] the most unspeakable torment;"²⁰ and her love, denied, runs the predicted "headlong course to desperate madness."²¹

FOOTNOTES

¹The Dramatic Works of John Ford, ed. William Gifford, 2 vol. (London, 1827). Vol. 1. p. 495.

²See Peter Ure, "Marriage and the Domestic Drama in Heywood and Ford," English Studies, XXXII (1931).

³BH, II, iii, p. 250 and 251.

⁴See Clifford Leech, John Ford and the Drama of his Time (London, 1957). p. 74.

⁵Gifford, vol. I, p. 337.

⁶See, for example, S. P. Sherman, "Ford's Contribution to the Decadence of the Drama," Shaping Men and Women (New York, 1928).

⁷FCN, IV, i, p. 288; BH, II, ii, p. 244; III, v, p. 277; IV, ii, p. 292; II, iii, p. 250; LS, V, iii, p. 108; Q, III, 2196; BH, IV, ii, p. 293.

⁸WEd, I, i, p. 177. The part of The Witch of Edmonton concerned with Thorney and Winnifrede is generally attributed to Ford. See M. J. Sargeaunt, John Ford (Oxford, 1935) p. 35.

⁹There is also evidence that her marriage is consummated, as has been pointed out by Peter Ure (op. cit., note 2). But if Bassanes is not actually impotent, the suggestion is certainly that he is sterile.

¹⁰Anatomy, III, p. 348.

¹¹Ibid., I, p. 18.

¹²FCN, I, ii, p. 235.

¹³IV, i, p. 287.

¹⁴The Insatiate Countess, IV, ii, 41.

¹⁵LT, II, ii, p. 39.

¹⁶LS, V, i, p. 89.

¹⁷LM, III, ii, p. 54.

¹⁸LS, II, ii, p. 40.

¹⁹Anatomy, III, p. 171.

²⁰LM, III, iii, p. 69.

CHAPTER V

STRUCTURE AND THE THEMES OF PLATONIC AND "HEROICAL" LOVE

At this point a more general examination of Ford's treatment of love may be appropriate. Having seen how he drew many of his central ideas from the contemporary view of love as a pathological condition, and how frustration, the basis of love melancholy, is also the basis of the relationships that Ford is most concerned with, we may go on to consider to what extent he was influenced by other contemporary ideas of love. In this chapter I intend to discuss Ford's position in the Love versus Lust controversy, the influence of neo-Platonic ideas of love on his drama, and his belief in the current doctrine of "heroical love," or love as a pastime almost exclusive to the aristocracy.

If we consider Ford's heroines, from Annabella to Penthea, from Bianca to Spinella, it would seem a difficult task to decide what kind of love he considers virtuous and what sinful; to discover, in fact, where he draws the line between love and lust. It seems to me that one unmistakable guide he gives us is the structural pattern of his plays. That the structure of Ford's plays does follow a pattern is shown by an analysis of his major and minor plots in relation to each other. Such an analysis also clearly indicates the kind of love he thought admirable, the kind he thought reprehensible, and the kind he dismissed as merely absurd.

Ford's critics, in their attitude to his subplots and comic sequences, seldom take their criticism beyond a tacit wish that he had not

written them, or at most an acknowledgement that his baser characters sometimes act as foils to the noble ones. I do not intend to defend Ford's frequently maladroit attempts at comedy, nor the distorted melodrama of such plots as those concerned with Ferentes or Hippolita; but I believe that Ford's plays are worth considering as whole units, because he seems to have had a definite purpose in the selection of the kind of peripheral plots suitable for inclusion with his central stories.

Ford's plays are usually constructed around a triple plot: the central one, which is seriously if not tragically conducted; a secondary plot, which may be wholly serious or partly comic as well; and a tertiary plot, nearly always comic, and frequently concerned with the cure of a "humour" character. Sometimes these three elements of the story are so distinct that the play seems in danger of falling apart: In The Fancies, for instance, we can see the connection in theme between the stories of Castamela and of Flavia, and Romanello, as the suspicious lover of the one and brother of the other, provides a link in plot; but we find it difficult to reconcile the Secco-Morosa plot with the main action. On the other hand, The Broken Heart is a more tightly constructed play because Ithocles, the hero of one plot, is the villain of the other. And in this play the comic tertiary plot is only rudimentary, and it seems that Ford for once decided to abandon it. The exchange at the end of Act I, Scene ii, where Christalla and Philema hold off the advances of Hemophil and Groneas, certainly suggests that Ford had once intended to develop this interplay along the lines of the battle of the sexes in Love's Labour's Lost. But this is not elaborated, and Hemophil and Groneas scarcely have time to demonstrate the "qualities" of "Glutton" and

"Tavern-haunter" that are fitted to their names. The same abbreviation of the tertiary plot seems to have occurred in The Queen, where we only hear about some horse-play in which Bufo is married to Mopas who is disguised as a woman; this it must surely have been Ford's original intention to portray on the stage.

The different layers of Ford's plots are thematically related to one another in different ways. The secondary or tertiary layer is often a parallel to the primary one, or a variation on it. This is most obvious in The Queen, where Salassa's tyrannous behaviour towards Velasco is a mirror image of Alphonso's to his wife, and both are brought in the end penitent on their knees to beg forgiveness of the partners they have abused. In The Fancies, Flavia, the married woman, is arbitrarily disposed of and then suspected of immorality, as is Castamela, the virgin, in the primary plot. And at the same time Spadone, the eunuch in the tertiary plot, is a grossly distorted reflection of the impotent Octavio.

But the most typical thematic connection is arranged on a pattern of contrasts in love relationships, where the two subsidiary intrigues set off the main relationship with which we are concerned.

This central love is portrayed as deep and sincere and chaste: it may lead its protagonists to extremes, but we feel they are acting under compulsion, and they remain the figures who command our sympathy. This kind of love is always seriously treated: there is no such mockery of this central passion in any of Ford's plays as there is in As You Like It and Love's Labour's Lost. Then, to set off this love, on the one hand is a story of lust, which of its nature can be either absurd or tragic in its results; and on the other mere 'courtship,' the extreme of convention and

feigned emotions, which is always absurd.

Love's Sacrifice is the play that exemplifies this type of structure most clearly. The central love of Fernando and Bianca is the one for which our sympathy is enlisted; and though it is adulterous, Ford intends it to be taken as a deep and admirable kind of love. Fernando's passion may be violent, it may override all the reasons he can himself urge against it, yet he can claim for it that when he pleads his cause he is not 'unclasping the book of lust,' but giving expression to "a love, as chaste/As softness of desire can intimate."¹ Even when Bianca comes to his bed in her night-dress, and offers herself to him, he can prove the purity of his love by not taking the body which she swears she will kill after the act.

Heaven forbid that I
Should by a wanton appetite profane
This sacred temple! 'tis enough for me
You'll please to call me servant.
. . . I'll master passion, and triumph
In being conquered. (II, iv, p. 53).

Fernando cannot help his love for his friend's wife, and being in love, he cannot help speaking. Ford makes it clear that he is acting under compulsion up to this point -- he "must speak, or burst."² But when it comes to the physical consummation of the passion, Fernando can and does control himself, and this constitutes his virtue, and Bianca's.

Juxtaposed with the story of this undeniable but controlled love is the story of the plain lust of Ferentes. During the course of the play he seduces three women, Julia, Colona and Morona. For him the conquest of a woman is a matter of nothing nobler than bodily satisfaction and conceit. Even his victim, Colona, suspects his motives: she asks him,

"Why should you seek, my lord, to purchase glory/By the disgraces of a silly maid?" (I, ii, p. 18). And in this scene Ford exhibits Ferentes' insincerity by contrasting his behaviour with Colona, the present quarry, and Julia, yesterday's prey. To Colona he professes himself ambitious only to earn the title of her servant; but Julia he addresses familiarly as "wench", and when she shows herself jealous and impatient that he should fulfil his previous promises of marriage, speaks insultingly of her 'nunquam satis.' In the main plot Fernando is silenced by Bianca's serious "Fernando,/Jest not at my calamity,"³ but in this secondary one, though lives and honours are still at stake, there is some humorous treatment. Ferentes' sexual fatigue caused by his own feats of virility is comic, and so is his tired conclusion that no woman tempted remains chaste. He is in the same comic category as the Squire of Dames. And there is a grim humour in the symmetry of the revenge enacted by the three women in the dance, with their three illegitimate children brought forth as witnesses to their father's guilt.

If the seat of Fernando's love is his heart, and of Ferentes', his genitals, the seat of Mauruccio's love is his tongue. He is a student of "courtship," an inventor of phrases and love conceits, a spewer-forth of rhyme, and the chief admirer of his own technique in wooing. All the wooing he ever does is to his mirror, and when he is actually confronted by the lady of his choice, he is tongue-tied, or verbose to the extent of being incoherent. Appropriately senile and dried-out, he can only assume the trappings of a lover, but he cannot be one. And he is entirely absurd. The treatment he receives certainly seems severe in comparison with his misdemeanour: he is sent to prison for a crime he has not committed, and

released only on condition that he marries an old woman and takes care of her and her bastard; and as a final blow he is banished from the court. To our view he does not deserve this treatment; but Ford is often arbitrary in his disposal of his minor characters, and in this case the fate of Mauruccio is justified by the fact that he is thus cured of his 'humour' of being a courtier.

Ford uses this pattern of contrasts in the love relationships in other plays. In The Lady's Trial the central story is of the virtuous love of husband and wife, Auria and Spinella: of her resolute fidelity to him when she is tempted by Adurni, and of his steadfast faith in her when he is fed with suspicion by Aurelio. As foil to this story, on the one hand, is the story of Levidolce, who, having divorced her first husband in order to become the mistress of the same Adurni whom Spinella resists, then tries to seduce Malfato, the next available male. Thirdly, there is the story of Amoretta, the lisping maid whose humour it is to refuse all suitors of her own rank and birth, and wait for a prince to prostrate himself at her feet; and who is cured of her humour by the exasperating antics of two absurd suitors.

In fact the same structural pattern based on attitudes to love emerges as emerged in Love's Sacrifice. Levidolce is not so extreme a case of lust as Ferentes, but she again is associated with three different men: Benatzi, Adurni and Malfato; nor is Amoretta a full parallel with Mauruccio, but her part in the play is as much concerned with satire on the love convention because of her two suitors: Guzman and Fulgoso respectively represent the opposite extremes of convention and boorishness in wooing. Partly because Levidolce and Amoretta are women, and

so receive a gentler treatment than their equivalents in Love's Sacrifice, and partly because this play is not a tragedy, and is generally much more muted in tone, their stories end happily. Levidolce repents of her aberrations, and re-marries her husband, Benatzi; and Amoretta is cured of her snobbish humour and settles for a husband suitable to her condition.

Even the Lover's Melancholy, which seems more tightly constructed because of the interweaving of love and blood relationships, exhibits much the same pattern. The primary and secondary plots are closely linked by the fact that Eroclea is a central figure in both of them: nevertheless, we can recognize that the story of how Eroclea is restored to her lover and her father is a different one from the story of how Thamasta comes to love the long-disdained Menaphon at last. In this case Thamasta, in the secondary plot, is 'cured' of a humour very like Amoretta's in her tertiary plot; but a good deal more care is spent on her character. The cure that is effected when she suffers the humiliation of declaring an irresistible passion for someone who proves to be a girl in disguise is not simply an amusing and ingenious resolution to a minor story, as in the case of Amoretta, but it is psychologically convincing.⁴

The central love of Palador for Eroclea is pure and chaste. Ford is so concerned to make a statement about this that he gives Palador a speech to conclude the fourth act, just after Eroclea has been restored to him, that is apparently unrelated to what has gone before:

Blush, sensual follies,
Which are not guarded with thoughts chastely pure!
There is no faith in lust, but baits of arts;
'Tis virtuous love keeps clear contracted hearts. (IV, iii, p. 87).

Thamasta's passion, on the other hand, is something she feels she ought to

resist, though she finds she has not the power; it is a passion that makes her "sensible of being a traitor/To honour and to shame."⁵ Thamasta is too noble to personify lust as Ferentes personifies it, and yet her rivalry with her own earthy serving-maid and her importunate proposals to someone far her inferior in rank make her story that of the unbridled passion that is contrasted with the controlled love of Palador. There is not much that is humorous in Thamasta's story, but it does not have the solemnity of Palador's. She herself, still shaken by the passion that moved her declaration and forced Parthenophil's revelation, can wryly comment,

O, the Powers

Who do direct our hearts, laugh at our follies! (III, ii, p. 61).

Finally, to complete the pattern, there is Cuculus, whose obvious kinship with Mauruccio I have already pointed out. He, too, is an old man; he, too, does his wooing in rehearsal rather than in actuality. And the humour he affords is almost entirely dependent on the conventions of courtship.

'Tis Pity She's a Whore at first sight seems to be a notable exception to this structural rule of setting off virtuous love with the merely conventional or the merely appetitive; for the central love in this play is incestuous. However, our judgement on Giovanni and Annabella is mitigated, partly by the fatalism of the play, but also by the contrast with the figures in the subplot. Soranzo, having debauched someone else's wife, cannot move our sympathy when he finds his own is not chaste. So Giovanni and Annabella monopolise our sympathy as a pair of star-crossed lovers, while it is Hippolita who emerges as the lustful woman. Having

been an unfaithful wife, she becomes a revengeful mistress: and Ricardetto, Soranzo and Vasques are the trio of men in her story. In the tertiary plot, Bergetto provides comedy, not as an absurdly conventional lover but as an absurdly unconventional one, like Fulgoso in The Lady's Trial.

By analysing Ford's plots in this way to examine their structure, we find some indication of the basic seriousness of his treatment of love and love melancholy. His central plots and characters, in both his tragedies and his so-called comedies, are serious, almost sacrosanct. We are not permitted to laugh at them as we do at Biron, or Orlando, or even Romeo. On the other hand Ford shows himself wittily versed in all manner of tricks and satire at the expense of the love convention. From the extreme of continence to the extreme of licentiousness, and from high seriousness to absurdity: this was the range which Ford found in sexual relationships, and which he was concerned to demonstrate in the structure of his plays.

This analysis of Ford's method of separating different aspects of love to the different levels of his plot makes it easier to determine his stand in the love-lust controversy. From his main plots there emerges the love which he offers for our admiration. This is a kind of love so powerful that it cannot be fended off or cured by mere physic or reasoning; but it can and must be controlled in its physical expression. Orgilus, Fernando, Palador, Troylo-Savelli, Malfato and Velasco are among Ford's male characters whose love is to be controlled rather than expelled. It is those who yield physically to their love, without the sanction of marriage, -- Hippolita, Levidolce and Ferentes -- who are offered for our censure.

Most of Ford's direct statements on the ennobling power of love occur in his comic passages. Bergetto, the maladroit suitor of Annabella, actually falls in love with Philotis, and tells his servant, "I tell thee, Poggio, I begin to grow valiant methinks, my courage begins to rise."⁶ And Groneas boasts to Philema of his courageous deeds in the wars, "Slashing off one man's head, another's nose,/Another's arms and legs," concluding that in the midst of it all he would

with a sigh remember thee,
And cry, 'dear Philema, 'tis for thy sake
I do these deeds of wonder.' (BH, I, ii, p. 227).

The increase in courage that a lover experiences is a commonplace, as Salassa remarks when she determines to augment her own glory by turning a brave man into a coward instead.

But if we take into account the implicit statements in Ford's plays, we find that he is constantly exalting love -- chaste love, as opposed to "the leprosy of lust" -- as, in Burton's words, "the height of mortal good:"⁷ if marriage is the aim and if that aim is not denied. The condemnation of love by Bacon and many of the medical or philosophical writers does not enter Ford's plays. Man does not betray the divinity in his nature by loving a woman, though if his love is denied his actions may become irrational. Giovanni's love is doomed, but that is because it is incestuous; Velasco in love may be absurd, but it is his mistress's treatment in holding him off, not his love itself, that makes him so. For the most part Ford does not portray love as "the liver-vein, which makes flesh a deity,/A green goose a goddess -- pure, pure idolatry;" he is concerned rather to convince us that his women actually deserve the veneration they are accorded.

There is a strong vein of Platonic love in Ford's depiction of relationships between men and women. Like his characters, Ford confirms the Platonic definition of love as the desire of beauty; and his plays are explicit illustrations of the natural association of beauty with virtue.

All Ford's heroines are described as beautiful. The first time Palador refers to Eroclea, he remembers her as "a lovely beauty;"⁸ Bianca's "beauty and virtue" were the only dowry she brought to the Duke of Pavy, and they were deemed sufficient.⁹ In Orgilus's first account of Penthea's story, he establishes that she is both virtuous and beautiful, in fact, a "heaven of perfections;"¹⁰ while Nearchus speaks of the report of Calantha's "beauty, virtue, / Sweetness and singular perfections."¹¹ Katherine, in Perkin Warbeck, is similarly designated as virtuous and beautiful in the first scene of her appearance. And there is the same combination of outer and inner beauty in Castamela and in Spinella.¹² In The Queen there is in fact considerable plot interest in whether the queen's physical beauty is matched by virtue, or whether in her case "heaven mocks itself." Alphonso, while he believes in her guilt, thinks of her sin as the greater for her beauty, as though this were an added piece of duplicity:

I . . . ever thought
That whoredom could not suit herself so trimly
On virtue's outside. (III, 2198).

And for a while the interest is centred on the conflict of his love for her beauty and his abhorrence of the lack of virtue it conceals. Mur-etto, during the time he is playing the villainous detractor, keeps harping on this contradiction in the queen, as he fans Alphonso's

jealousy:

Mark her beauty throughly.
Now, by all the power of love, 'tis pity
She should not be as fair within as without; (V, 3360).

so that, when he at last stands forward to vouch for her chastity, his argument has the more force by constituting a restoration of the rightful correspondence of beauty and virtue.

Annabella is the notable exception to this rule, in being beautiful but not chaste. She is the exemplum to Bassanes' tenet that beauty, if it is not a blessing, is a curse. She herself, when she has come to repent her sin and Giovanni's, and to turn to the friar for counsel, realizes that the stars that reigned at her nativity and made her beautiful also ordained the fate of Giovanni, and that

Beauty that clothes the outside of the face
Is cursed if it be not clothed with grace. (TP, V, i, p. 189).

It is ironic that Giovanni, the lover most competent at justifying his love in Platonic terms by calling it desire for beauty and virtue, should be matched with the one woman in Ford's plays whose inner virtue does not match her exterior beauty.

A realization of Ford's dependence on the ideas of Platonic love is necessary for an understanding of the play which is generally considered his worst, The Fancies, Chaste and Noble -- "this literally and artistically scandalous romantic comedy," as M. E. Cochnower calls it.¹³ For in one sense the whole play may be taken as an indictment on the sarcastic sniggers with which the world greets a description of a "Platonic" relationship between a man and a woman.

In order to accept the play at all, we have to accept that there

is nothing wicked or unwholesome in Octavio's establishment of the Bower of Fancies. A middle-aged man who happens to be impotent has set up his estate as a kind of retired finishing school for his nieces and perhaps another virtuous young girl: with them he takes his pleasure in conversing, of love and other subjects, and in pleasing "the outward senses," in singing and dancing and so forth. His one abnormality in this is that he jealously wants to maintain the privacy of his establishment, and so restricts beyond necessity the number of visitors allowed within the precincts. But the immoral behaviour of the few servants he does admit causes rumours to spread in the world outside. Various scandalous speculations begin, so that the Bower, the innocent consolation of an afflicted man, comes to be regarded as a den of perversion. Those who do not know of Octavio's impotence think the Fancies are his mistresses, and that he is maintaining something like a harem; those who do suggest frustrated dallies, and even lesbianism among the girls.

Livio and Romanello are the characters who chiefly represent the world's suspicions. Castamela, too, suspects the worst at first, and is horrified that her brother Livio should place her in such an establishment. But it is the audience who are the chief entertainers of lewd suspicions.

Morosa's depiction of Octavio's behaviour and intentions is coarsely suggestive, though never explicit; so that when Octavio expounds Platonic love to Castamela,

Love, dear maid,
Is but desire of beauty, and 'tis proper
For beauty to desire to be beloved, (III, iii, p. 282)

she repudiates him. He is so admiring of her virtue and chastity, however, that she consents to listen to him, and by the following scene we find she has been converted to his principles. She refuses to return home with her now repentant brother, quotes Octavio's definition of love to him, and by her state of exaltation conveys that she has been taught to ascend the Platonic 'ladder:'

Prithee, interrupt not
 The paradise of my becharming thoughts,
 Which mount my knowledge to the sphere I move in,
 Above this useless tattle. (IV, i, p. 285).

As a result she herself becomes the object of suspicion, first by her brother, then by her lover, Romanello.

Ford's device of making the audience participators in the chief sin exemplified in the play -- that of suspecting evil where there is none -- entails some trickery and concealing of information (such as Castamela's conversion to Octavio's Platonic doctrine). This makes the ending of the play, where the whole dubious establishment of the Bower of Fancies is revealed as above-board and harmless, seem like a piece of cheating. Similarly, the revelation itself falls flat if Octavio's revealed motivation still looks like senile amorousness; rather it must be taken as a virtuous avuncular concern for the welfare of his wards, with some Platonic ideals of love dictating the recreations of the establishment. Octavio's age and impotence, in fact, make him quite suitable as a Platonic lover, for both make him unlikely to remain on the lowest rung of the ladder, that of carnal desire; since he cannot find any satisfaction there, he must ascend.¹⁴ It is Livio and Romanello and the audience who have sinned, in supposing his motives are

carnal. The epilogue, spoken by the maligned ladies, takes up the theme of Honi soit qui mal y pense.

The Platonic element in Ford's philosophy of love is not his only means of exalting love as an ennobling force. A study of his plays makes it apparent that he consistently connects love with nobility -- a nobility not only of character but also of birth. If Ford had been asked the etymology of the adjective in the phrase "heroical love," he would probably have derived it from ἥρως rather than ἔπος. Though he concludes The Fancies with a dance to show how love enthralls all classes of men -- perhaps to justify all the horse-play about love and jealousy among the baser characters -- one certainly emerges from a reading of his plays with the feeling that it is only the noble who are capable of true love, the love that is combined with chastity.

In The Witch of Edmonton Ford proved he could portray love realistically in the members of the lower middle class, but here he was probably working under the direction of Dekker; when he is writing plays single-handed, he deals predominantly with the upper middle class and the aristocracy: with the court and its hangers-on. It is perhaps significant that Annabella, the heroine who yields to sensual passion, should be the object of snobbish scorn as of moral censure: "Your goodly madam-merchant,"¹⁵ Hippolita calls her, contemptuously. Bianca, who only just resists the passion to which Annabella yields, is also depicted as being notably below the social level from which Caraffa was expected to choose his wife. Yet she is the daughter of a gentleman, and still could not, like "any waiting-woman in the land,"¹⁶ actually commit adultery with Fernando.

Ford's 'nobility,' in fact, seem to have a moral claim to their exalted position beside their hereditary one. But if his ruling classes are nobler, so are their trials greater: their position is no sinecure. They are both capable of enduring more, and expected to do so. Clifford Leech calls this constant exaltation of the nobility Ford's "aristocratic ideal"¹⁷ and Una Ellis-Fermor speaks of "chivalry" as being, along with courage and continence, one of Ford's three "cardinal virtues."¹⁸

Typically, Ford's central characters exist more in endurance than in action. The emphasis is on the living through of a trial with honour, not on any ingenuity or valiant action to meet it. In this sense Thamasta is not typical of Ford's women, for she resolves to do all she can to win the boy she has fallen in love with; and her headlong insistence at last exposes Eroclea's disguise. Yet, even considering this behaviour, Ford has ensured that we do not forget her nobility and the qualities that go with it by providing, in the person of her waiting-woman, Kala, a rival and a contrast.

Kala finds that, in beginning to woo Parthenophil for her mistress, she has accidentally extracted a promise from him that if he ever woos any woman it will be she, and he maintains this in spite of Thamasta's ominous "Indeed! But say, a nobler love should interpose." When Parthenophil has left, Thamasta turns on Kala. "Art thou a rival fit to cross my fate?" she asks; and the humiliation she feels in this predicament is part of the cure for her haughty malady. Kala, realizing that she has little hope of benefiting by her service, decides to take up Parthenophil on his promise, since he has expressed a preference for her:

What! we're all

But flesh and blood; the same thing that will do
My lady good, will please her woman too. (LM, II, ii).

But then it becomes clear that this in fact is not so at all, that Thamasta's needs and Kala's are by no means identical. Thamasta may make her own avowal and plead her own cause, unlike most of Ford's noblewomen, but marriage is the only termination to love that she has in view; whereas Kala, being refused, is resentful at being cheated not of marriage, but of merely carnal pleasures.

He that cheats
A waiting-woman of a free good turn
She longs for, must expect a shrewd revenge.
Sheep-spirited boy!' altho' he had not married me,
He might have proffer'd kindness in a corner,
And ne'er have been the worse for it. (III, ii, p. 56).

In fact Ford makes sure that we do not waste any sympathy on a rival of Thamasta who is certainly not 'fit to cross her fate.'

It is The Broken Heart that sets forth most clearly the great difference that exists between the noble and the base. The noble characters, courageously enduring tremendous trials, frequently contrast their condition with the easier lot of the working men and women whose sole needs are bodily ones, and whose sufferings can be only physical, as opposed to the mental anguish of their superiors. This is the sentiment expressed when Penthea visits her languishing brother:

Penthea. The handmaid to the wages
Of country toil, drinks the untroubled streams
With leaping kids, and with the bleating lambs,
And so allays her thirst secure; whilst I
Quench my hot sighs with fleetings of my tears.
Ithocles. The labourer doth eat his coarsest bread,
Earn'd with his sweat, and lays him down to sleep;
While every bit I touch turns in digestion
To gall, as bitter as Penthea's curse. (III, ii, p. 260).

The emphasis is again on endurance, of which only the nobility are

capable, in Calantha's dying speech. After her tremendous display of fortitude, when she danced on through news of the deaths of her father, her friend, and her lover, she arranges all the affairs of Sparta, and marries the dead body of Ithocles by placing the ring upon his finger. She then explains her behaviour, before her heart breaks and she dies.

Oh, my lords,
 I but deceiv'd your eyes with antick gesture,
 When one news straight came huddling on another,
 Of death! and death! and death! still I danced forward;
 But it struck home, and here, and in an instant.
 Be such mere women, who, with shrieks and outcries,
 Can vow a present end to all their sorrows,
 Yet live to court new pleasures, and outlive them:
 They are the silent griefs which cut the heart-strings;
 Let me die smiling. (V, iii, p. 318).

Ford's heroines, either in their passions or in their continence, are never "mere women."

Ford's plays are to a large extent constructed on a principle of contrasts, implied or explicit, which he uses to exalt love as a force which is more noble than any mere 'perturbation of the mind.' The plot structure is calculated to set off the continence and sincerity of the central lovers by means of contrasts with the empty or lustful pretensions of the others. The theme of continence is reinforced by the elements of Platonic love in the plays. In the social world which Ford as a dramatist creates for his characters, he conveys, through contrasts between aristocratic endurance and low indulgence, that continence in love is naturally associated with nobility.

FOOTNOTES

¹LS, II, iii, p. 47.

²II, i, p. 34.

³II, iv, p. 53.

⁴See H. J. Oliver, The Problem of John Ford (Melbourn, 1955). p. 54.

⁵LM, I, iii, p. 27.

⁶TP, III, i, p. 154.

⁷Anatomy, III, p. 58.

⁸LM, ii, i, p. 35.

⁹LS, I, i, p. 13.

¹⁰BH, I, i, p. 129.

¹¹BH, III, iii, p. 268.

¹²See G. F. Sensabaugh, "John Ford and Platonic Love in the Court," SP XXXVI (1939).

¹³"John Ford," p. 199.

¹⁴In Bembo's oration on Platonic love in Castiglione's The Courtier, he signifies that old men are better suited to be Platonic lovers than young men.

¹⁵TP, II, ii, p. 136.

¹⁶LS, V, i, p. 89.

¹⁷John Ford and the Drama of his Time, p. 13.

¹⁸Jacobean Drama, p. 235.

CONCLUSION

Burton, when he embarked on his section of love melancholy, found it necessary to justify himself for dallying with such an apparently frivolous topic. The need for such a justification would never have occurred to Ford: sexual love is his subject. It is quite true that, except in the case of Perkin Warbeck, he 'removed the scene of the drama from the battlefield to the boudoir.'¹ To this extent his scope is limited; but within his subject his range is considerable.

The deep but straitened agony of the lovers denied, and the happiness of the lovers united, are emotions which he can convey more poignantly than any of his contemporaries. For just as Burton ends his section on love melancholy with a paean of Hymen io Hymen! so Ford, too, celebrates marriage as "the height of mortal good." It is true he shows that marriage can be disastrous; but the marriages of Penthea, Bianca and Annabella were not based on love: and it is this, and not marriage, which Ford represents as tragic. In those plays which end happily, he usually contrives to make his lovers' reunions not just a resolution, but a climax. Palador and Eroclea, Alphonso and the Queen, Auria and Spinnella: all have at last moments of joy which redeem their sufferings in separation.

Love melancholy, that whole system of medical theories, literary conventions, and ethical standards which Burton made his subject in Part III of The Anatomy of Melancholy, emerges as central to Ford's plays. For better or worse, Ford's sophistication in the contemporary conventions

of love accounts for a large proportion of his comic sallies, just as his preoccupation with the physical, with the body which reflects the mind, accounts for much of the sensationalism in his plays.

His interest in pathological states of mind tallies with Burton's, as does his belief in the interaction of the mind with the body. These ideas determine the course of many of his central plots, which become case histories of causes, symptoms and treatments of pathological conditions.

But more important than all this is that Ford's particular dramatic strength lies in the portrayal of precisely those situations and emotions which are also at the core of love melancholy. For love melancholy, when all is said and done, is only frustration, the only cure for which is consummation. The bodily state of sexual deprivation and the emotional state resulting from a denial of love: this is the subject matter which absorbed Ford, and from which he derives his dramatic strength.

The most vivid contemporary comment³² that has survived on John Ford connects him, appropriately, with the traditional figure of the melancholy lover, or with the portrait of 'Inamorato' in the frontispiece of The Anatomy of Melancholy:

Deep in a dump John Ford alone was got,
With folded arms and melancholy hat.

FOOTNOTES

¹ S. P. Sherman, "Ford's Contribution to the Decadence of the Drama" op. cit. J. M. Sargeaunt, in John Ford, quotes Thorndike's condemnation of Ford's 'absorption with questions of sex;" her comment on this line of criticism is that "The critic might as well have condemned Mrs. Beeton for her absorption in the problems of household management." (p. 184).

² "On the Time-Poets," Choice Drollery (London, 1659). From William Hemminge's Elegy on Randolph's Finger.

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